CANADIAN THESES ON MICROFICHE

THÈSES CANADIENNES SUR MICROFICHE

National Library of Canada
Collections Development Branch

Canadian Theses on
Microfiche Service

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
Direction du développement des collections

Service des thèses canadiennes
sur microfiche

NOTICE

The quality of this microfiche is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Previously copyrighted materials (journal articles, published tests, etc.) are not filmed.

Reproduction in full or in part of this film is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30. Please read the authorization forms which accompany this thesis.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microfiche dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

Les documents qui font déjà l'objet d'un droit d'auteur (articles de revue, examens publiés, etc.) ne sont pas microfilmés.

La reproduction, même partielle, de ce microfilm est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30. Veuillez prendre connaissance des formules d'autorisation qui accompagnent cette thèse.

THIS DISSERTATION
HAS BEEN MICROFILMED
EXACTLY AS RECEIVED

LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE
NOUS L'AVONS REÇUE

Canada

NL 339 (r. 86/09)

0-315-19634-3

National Library of Canada | Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Canadian Theses Division | Division des thèses canadiennes

295

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

67542

PERMISSION TO MICROFILM — AUTORISATION DE MICROFILMER

• Please print or type — Écrire en lettres moulées ou dactylographier

Full Name of Author — Nom complet de l'auteur

MAURICE JOSEPH TURMEL

Date of Birth — Date de naissance	Country of Birth — Lieu de naissance
Feb. 28, 1945	Canada

Permanent Address — Résidence fixe

406 Vanier House
Michener Park
Edmonton, Alberta T6H 4N1

Title of Thesis — Titre de la thèse

The Phenomenology of Positive Disintegration Theory: Towards a Comprehensive Philosophy of Development and Change as a Guide to the Therapeutic Encounter.

University — Université

University of Alberta

Degree for which thesis was presented — Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée

Doctor of Philosophy

Year this degree conferred — Année d'obtention de ce grade	Name of Supervisor — Nom du directeur de thèse
1983	Dr. William Hague

Permission is hereby granted to the NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

L'autorisation est, par la présente, accordée à la BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DU CANADA de microfilmer cette thèse et de prêter ou de vendre des exemplaires du film.

L'auteur se réserve les autres droits de publication; ni la thèse ni de longs extraits de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans l'autorisation écrite de l'auteur.

Date	Signature
June 3, 1983	Maurice J. Turmel

NL-91 (4/77)

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

The Phenomenology of Positive Disintegration Theory: Towards a Comprehensive Philosophy of Development and Change as a Guide to the Therapeutic Encounter

by

(C) Maurice J. Turmel

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF Doctor of Philosophy

IN

Counselling Psychology

Department of Educational Psychology

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

Fall 1983

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR Maurice J. Turmel

TITLE OF THESIS The Phenomenology of Positive Disintegration Theory: Towards a Comprehensive Philosophy of Development and Change as a Guide to the Therapeutic Encounter

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED Doctor of Philosophy

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED Fall 1983

Permission is hereby granted to THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA LIBRARY to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

(SIGNED) Maurice J. Turmel

PERMANENT ADDRESS:

406 Vanier House
Michener Park
Edmonton, Alberta
T6H 4N1

DATED June 3 1983

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled The Phenomenology of Positive Disintegration Theory: Towards a Comprehensive Philosophy of Development and Change as a Guide to the Therapeutic Encounter submitted by Maurice J. Turmel in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

W. Hagna

Supervisor

John Dilorne

Jan van Tassel

Peggy Platt

Marlene D. Rankel

Dexter R. Amend

External Examiner

Date May 6, 1983

Dedication

To

Leslee

Abstract

This study aims at answering a number of interrelated questions addressing its principal goal of evolving a comprehensive philosophy of development and change as a guide to the therapeutic encounter. The Theory of Positive Disintegration (K. Dabrowski, 1964) in dialogue with a number of Existential-Phenomenological positions on development and change forms the basis of the philosophy to which comparative psychological insights from the classical "Myth of the Hero" (Campbell, 1973) are integrated. An on-going dialogue, engaged in the areas of "development", "research", "pathology" and "psychotherapy" serves to demonstrate that the Theory of Positive Disintegration is an existential theory in terms of the experiential dimensions it priorizes as essential to higher development, experiences valued by existential-phenomenological psychologists as well as scientist-practitioners such as Irvin D. Yalom, Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, Rollo May, James Bugental and Richard Johnson. The dialogue also emphasizes the value of rigorous qualitative validation of a given set of principles since it is this qualitative dimension that practitioners connect with first in their efforts to measure the therapeutic usefulness of a particular paradigm. To this initial phenomenological endorsement could then be added the results of more precise experimental procedures as an additional test of a theory's empirical strength, in this case the Theory of Positive Disintegration.

Application of the philosophy's guiding principles is then demonstrated through presentation of a phenomenologically based therapeutic approach which it inspires. The stance is labelled phenomenological because of the emphasis on priorizing the client's "lived experience" rather than examining him or her through predefined categories or constructs. Through presentation of case examples and reference to relevant research literature the approach's many dimensions reveal themselves to be in tune with important experiential concerns that often emerge as part of a pattern of priority for individuals seeking therapeutic assistance. It remains for further application and evaluation of both the philosophy and ensuing therapeutic stance to gauge their full merit.

Acknowledgments

I wish to acknowledge the following for their support during the process of bringing this project to life.

Dr. W. Hague, my supervisor, for his kindness, compassion and understanding.

Dr. Marlene Rankel for her wisdom and nurturance.

Dr. John Osborne for his critical eye.

Drs. P. Platt, M. Van Manen and D. Amend for agreeing to serve on the committee and evaluate the work.

The Department of Educational Psychology for the assistanceships, office accomodations and general procedural guidance.

The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for the invitation to do graduate work at the University of Alberta.

And my good friends Debby Boddington, Jerry Bourque and Errol Thompson for their support.

Table of Contents

Chapter — Page

1. Introduction 1

1.0.1 Psychology, an attempt to meet human needs .. 1

1.0.2 Anxiety and disintegration in the present age 5

1.0.3 Personal philosophy as a guide to therapy .. 11

1.0.4 Existential-phenomenological psychology 17

1.0.5 Summary of present goals 27

2. The Theory of Positive Disintegration 31

2.0.1 Overview 31

2.0.2 The Theory of Positive Disintegration 33

2.0.3 Existential-Phenomenology and the TPD 49

2.0.4 Passion in personality development 60

2.0.5 Summary 73

3. Personality Transformation 75

3.0.1 Overview 75

3.0.2 Quantitative vs qualitative methods in human research 76

3.0.3 Personality transformation: The experiential landscape 81

3.0.4 Personality transformation and the TPD 107

3.0.5 Repentence and rebirth 111

3.0.6 Summary 116

4. The Myth of the Hero 118

4.0.1 Functions of a living myth 118

4.0.2 The quest of the hero 122

4.0.3 The TPD as a modern myth 130

4.0.4 Summary 133

5. Pathology 140
5.0.1 Introductory notes 140
5.0.2 Anxiety 142
5.0.3 The dialogue continues 154
5.0.4 Summary 157
6. Existential Therapy and the TPD 159
6.0.1 Overview 159
6.0.2 Existential approaches to psychotherapy ...160
6.0.3 Adrian Van Kaam 161
6.0.4 Victor Frankl 167
6.0.5 Psychotherapy and the TPD 173
6.0.6 Summary 180
7. An Existential-Phenomenological Approach to Psychotherapy 182
7.0.1 The basic stance 182
7.0.2 Dimensions of the approach 183
7.0.3 Experiencing 202
7.0.4 Death awareness 213
7.0.5 Summary 224
8. Discussion 228
8.0.1 Value of an integrated approach to therapy 228
8.0.2 Demands on the therapist 230
8.0.3 Possible shortcomings 234
8.0.4 The need for qualitatively oriented research 236
8.0.5 Speculations on growth and change 239
8.0.6 Conclusions 245
Bibliography 247

Appendix A 254

List of Figures

Figure Page

1. The Inner Psychic Milieu.....40

1. Introduction

1.0.1 Psychology, an attempt to meet human needs

It has been suggested that as individuals we don't always get what we want in life but we somehow seem to get what we need. When we examine the historical development of psychology, we may realize that this idea applies here as well. Freud, for example, was not well received when advancing his rather revolutionary position on human development and motivation. In spite of that, his psychology eventually gained wide acceptance, and the Victorian attitude that had kept sexuality repressed was eventually dealt with openly.

Freud then went on to instruct a reluctant world on the dynamic aspects of human instincts and how their distortion could be detected in dreams. Undeterred by a skeptical professional community, he forged onward laying bare many cherished myths as he pursued truth in the area of human functioning. Continuously dissatisfied with the inadequate conceptions of development available from the prevailing models, Freud sought better ways to understand man, answering perhaps some call that arose out of currently felt needs.

As Freud's influence took hold, a number of new psychological theories began to emerge in response to the many questions his discoveries were raising. Alfred Adler, for example, advanced the idea that "social interest" was

also important to an individual's psychological development and eventually broke with Freud on this point. Each of the so called Neo-Freudians used some aspect of Freud's formulations as a take off point for their own ideas on development and change. In issuing their challenge, they gave notice of their dissatisfaction with a number of themes in psychoanalytic theory, much as Freud had done when he first confronted the medical community. Today, when a new theorist proposes to meet an unattended human need, he proceeds by first pointing out the flaws in a predecessor's position. Most often, this predecessor is Freud. His legacy continues to generate controversy today and in this respect may be still viewed as helping to meet current psychological needs.

Erikson's (1959) psychosocial stage theory and Skinner's (1971) behaviorism are examples of more modern psychological stances that have formed their identities in contradistinction to Freud. Erikson's formulations are in fact an elaboration on Freud's psychosexual stages and attend to the impact of an individual's environment on development. He is particularly well noted for identifying a number of crises that have to be resolved at key stages in life if an individual is to mature fully. Skinner, for his part, traces his roots back to Pavlov and Watson and has also established himself by setting his position against Freud's. His particular brand of behaviorism aims at dealing with human conduct in more concrete, predictable terms. In

the process, however, he and his followers have reduced everything psychological to glandular secretions, muscular movements, and stimulus-response networks. By insisting that many human behaviors can be controlled with the right reinforcement schedule, he has gone beyond Erikson in an attempt to priorize environmental influences. Skinner's rigorous but limited view had met with wide approval by a society that has become enamoured with the marvels of technology. Predictability through behavioral management schemes is seen to reduce fear and increase productivity. But the cost in terms of dehumanizing effects is now being felt as another kind of need, one which different views of man are attempting to meet (Barrett, 1958; 1979).

One of these views is Existentialism. As a philosophical and psychological movement, it has enjoyed slow but persistent growth in response to a number of felt needs left unattended by the prevailing psychological stances. One can trace the roots of existentialism back to the last century where writers such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Berdyaev began addressing themselves to aspects of human experiencing which were only being dealt with in literature and poetry. They wrote about anxiety, guilt, suffering, responsibility, love and freedom. They began to discuss in both philosophical and psychological terms the meanings these important experiences held for individuals.

Their present day counterparts continue the trend. Theorists and philosophers such as Jaspers and Heidegger, along with literary figures the likes of Sartre and Camus, and therapists such as May and Frankl have attuned themselves to the silent discontent of a world no longer satisfied with the hydraulic determinism of psychoanalytic theory, the naturalistic limitations of the psychosocial paridigms, and the narrow reductionism of behavioral approaches. Existentialists do not necessarily consider these models erroneous, but rather as incomplete in terms of their accounting for the full range of human experience. To the contrary, they appreciate the contributions of each of these psychologies, particularly those of the humanistic movement which also has been moving to meet unattended human needs. What upsets such individuals most is that in the pursuit of scientific certainty both early and modern psychology have neglected important aspects of human functioning that fell outside the range of the priorized objective approach. Even the humanists are guilty here because their efforts to provide a full accounting of human experience have been limited by endorsement of the existing quantitatively oriented scientific view. Therefore, our loves, our hates, our passions and what these mean to us continue to be neglected because such experiences cannot be fitted into the prevailing research mold, a paradigm that psychology borrowed from the natural sciences, rather than created in response to the human elements it wished to

study. Micheal Polanyi has warned of the dangers inherent in an attitude of unquestioned submission to any stance:

> In the days when an idea could be silenced by showing that it was contrary to religion, theology was the greatest single source of fallacies. Today, when any human thought can be discredited by branding it as unscientific, the power previously exercised by theology has passed over to science; hence science has become in its turn the greatest single source of error (Polanyi, p.91, 1958).

"Existentialism" and its research counterpart, "phenomenology", have emerged in reaction to the overemphasis on quantification with an aim of responding to a number of basic human experiences which positivistic psychology has ignored. Existentialism may not be what many want, but in a number of respects, appears necessary to meet many currently felt needs, particularly in helping enhance our understanding of the numerous experiential realities that are at the core of every day life.

1.0.2 Anxiety and disintegration in the present age

Shortly after World War Two, Rollo May (1955) described the then prevailing Zeitgeist as the "age of anxiety". He suggested this state of uneasiness was due to the fact that at this time in human history one era was dying while another had yet to be born, a process which he claims is still active today. The birth of this phenomenon can be

traced back to the Industrial Revolution and was first documented by Kierkegaard in his book *The concept of dread* (Trans. 1974). No one paid much attention to these early existentialist rumblings particularly during the period of high idealism that followed the First World War. But, as Campbell (1973) points out, the 1920's were already showing signs of the current decline. For example, although authors such as Thomas Mann, James Joyce and Marcel Proust were producing landmark works[1] reflecting the euphoria of the era, other writers had begun to recognize that there were cracks in this facade of well-being. Spengler in *The decline of the west*, Yeats in *A vision* and Leo Frobenius in a number of his writings were suggesting that despite its rational triumphs (science was to displace religion) and progressive political achievements, the heart of Occidental civilization was already beginning to disintegrate.

Psychologically, this disintegration and Angst were being reflected in the writings of existentialists such as Husserl and Heidegger who were hard at work resurrecting many of Kierkegaard's early works. A young psychologist named Kazimierz Dabrowski, equally interested in the latter's writings, was also at this time aware of the disintegrative climate of the era, but paid more attention to the plight of the sensitive individual rather than society as a whole. It was during this idealistic yet convulsive period in our psychological history that the

---

[1]e.g. Mann's "The magic mountain", Joyce's "Ulysses", Proust's "Remembrance of things past".

seeds of Positive Disintegration Theory came to be sown.

Like the existentialists, Dabrowski addressed himself to similar areas of human functioning neglected by representatives of the dominant psychologies. Although naturalistic (objective) in his conceptions, Dabrowski proves to be more concrete than the existentialists when addressing many of the same experiential issues, particularly in the area of human development. In describing growth as a process of "positive disintegration" occuring over five potential levels, Dabrowski accounts for many of the experiences existentialists hold dear while incorporating them into a comprehensive developmental paradigm (Dabrowski, 1964). However, the reverse is also true, the existentialists are themselves more concrete in a number of areas where Dabrowski proves vague. This will be amply demonstrated throughout the thesis.

One may now want to ask what need is being attended to by the "Theory of Positive Disintegration" and how is this reflected in the current Zeitgeist. I will begin by pointing to some of the more obvious world factors that are symptomatic of the present age. It is my belief, based on the contributions of "existentialism" and the "theory of positive disintegration", that the present era is not only coloured by a general state of uneasiness, but by disintegration as well.

A time of change and uncertainty

Today, more than ever before, we stand helpless as traditional values are continuously called into question and are seen to crumble before our eyes. We watch with dismay as an increasing proportion of new marriages end in divorce, as more and more long term relationships are being dissolved for previously unheard of reasons, and as crises in the home signal the disintegration of the nuclear family as we once knew it. In the area of employment, we witness the deepening divisions between management and labour and the glut of strikes that is crippling many of the world's economies - England in the 60's, Canada in the 70's, Poland in the 80's. The unchecked fluctuations in interest rates and soaring unemployment are currently breeding disillusionment with governments marked by a loss of confidence in political solutions and a "grab all you can get" attitude. We must also take note of the many attempts to regress, in both lifestyle and behavior, back to times which viewed from the present appear to be more secure. This becomes visible in our obsessions with nostalgia (old movies, the 50's), with antiques (solid, and long lasting), and with value systems that uphold the illusion of a more secure and stable past.

Internationally one may recognize in the revival of the "Moral majority" in the United States and the return to autocratic religious rule in Iran this need to find security in the past in the face of insecurity in the present. We are also witness to continued instability in the Middle East and

other parts of the globe as the United States and Russia play chess with the smaller nations of the world. We have been horrified numerous times by Russia's crushing power tactics, in Afghanistan most recently, in Checkoslovakia in 1968 and Hungary in 1956. Now the world holds its breath once again as the tiny nation of Poland struggles to her feet, much to the displeasure of neighboring communist authorities.

A large portion of today's religious fervor is a looking back into the "apparently" more stable philosophies of India, China, Japan and Tibet. For example, Chinese oracle books such as the *I Ching* are outselling most western philosophers (Campbell, 1973). This should not be too surprising in today's climate of "awareness", for part of the appeal of the Orient is that its disciplines are inward-turning, somewhat mystical and yet, essentially psychological. The existentialists echo similar sentiments when they submit that our greatest challenge today is to find "meaning" for our lives. As suggested earlier, traditional symbols and beliefs are being emptied of their inner content leaving modern man without a deeply felt frame of reference for his life as was once available through religion and myth. Only a vacuum of meaning has been left and, in the case of psychology, this emptiness has been filled by an almost exclusive reliance on scientific quantification. This is not to say that natural science psychology has no merit, but merely to point out that its

rapid development has occured at the expense of man's experiencing dimension. This in turn has resulted in a neglect of the very quality of our lives. Modern man I would suggest is railing against the repression of his spirit, and this protest can be heard in the voices of existentialists and Dabrowskians alike.

This is indeed a time of anxiety and disintegration as we await the birth of a new era for mankind. In this sense, a theory which can account for the disintegrative aspects of individual development in view of higher possibilities has as much to say about the current Zeitgeist as an existential stance which recognizes the hungry spirit of the modern era. We are learning that an undivided allegiance to technology can never be completely satisfactory in terms of all our human needs. One must carefully weigh the benefits of increased automation and computerization against their impact on an individual's sense of personal worth. Perhaps then we may begin to understand why our helping professions are increasingly being burdened with complaints of meaninglessness and boredom. The great technological advances of recent years emerge as a mixed blessing when we realize that better machines do not solve problems of the spirit and problems of meaning, nor can they rescue us from our human fate of death (Collaizi, 1975). Ultimately, it must be realized that only human beings can solve such problems for themselves, problems relating to the quality and therefore the very fabric of life.

It is for these and similar reasons that existential philosophy and psychology have cultivated a wide appeal in the past fifty years. In the present opinion, it is for the same reasons that the parallel development of "positive disintegration theory" has occured as well. Herein lies one of the thrusts of this project, namely, that both "positive disintegration theory" and "existentialism" are attempting to meet similar human needs by attending to experiential dimensions thus far neglected by the prevailing psychologies. Both positions provide evidence of this in their individual conceptions of human development, their views on therapeutic change and many of their guiding thoughts on pathology. For these reasons, one of my initial tasks will be to point up these similarities by engaging both stances in a comparative dialogue. This aspect of the discussion will aim at demonstrating that the "theory of positive disintegration (hereon referred to as the TPD) is "existentialist" in its priorizing of certain growth enhancing experiences and that a phenomenological appreciation of this has much to offer an aspiring psychotherapist particularly in the cultivation of a guiding therapeutic philosophy.

1.0.3 Personal philosophy as a guide to therapy

Whether explicitly aware of it or not each of us entertains a particular philosophy of life which guides us in our relations with our fellow man as well as with

ourselves. This philosophy would determine our style of life, our attitudes towards others, and the values we embrace in the shaping of a particular moral stance and conduct. As counselors and psychotherapists such a philosophy would also guide us in our encounters with clients. Even an attitude of "non-involvement" or "laissez-faire" still serves as a guiding therapeutic philosophy.

The practices of counselling and psychotherapy carry with them immense responsibilities. For this reason it would seem important that counselors and therapists periodically examine and question their guiding philosophy if only to make explicit what constitutes their particular life orientation, and hence, their therapeutic stance.

A number of counselors and psychotherapists admit to engaging in some form of critical self-reflection for the purposes of explicitly formulating a guiding philosophy (e.g. Frankl, 1967; Van Kaam, 1966; May, 1953; & Bugental, 1965). But, as with the majority of beginning practitioners, most tend to accept without question the view of man that frames the therapeutic approach they are currently enamoured with (Peavy, 1978; Chessick, 1977). And here is where problems can arise. A given therapeutic approach and its implicit philosophy of man may have been born in response to a prevailing Zeitgeist that is no longer tenable. As an example, many present-day psychoanalysts still hold tenaciously to most of Freud's basic concepts. Some, such as

Fingarette (1963), still attempt to validate Freud's personality constructs with modern methods of research despite the fact that the world has changed and interest in the relevance of such enterprises has faded. In their rigid adherence to Freudian postulates, the Fingarettes of our time hold a view of man that for most is no longer functional. On the other hand, there are psychoanalysts who, while grounded in Freudian psychology, have kept abreast of modern developments and have modified their positions to meet these changes. Psychologists and therapists such as Bugental (1965) and May (1953), for example, practice a form of psychoanalysis that is rooted in the Freudian tradition yet in tune with the demands of changing value systems and lifestyles. Their psychoanalysis is open-ended and continues to grow, whereas Fingarette's stance appears dogmatic and out of touch with current human needs.

Including Freud's many contributions, one must recognize that modern psychology supplies us with a variety of points of view regarding human development and the dynamics of behavior change. In this sense psychology in general can be characterized as holding a number of philosophies, many of which contradict each other. This makes it particularly difficult for the beginning practitioner who is struggling to form his or her clinical identity. With the multitude of available approaches, self-reflection in the light of accumulating experience appears to be especially important for coming to grips with,

and forming, a guiding therapeutic stance. In addition, a critical attitude towards existing and newly emerging approaches would afford an opportunity to occasionally modify or expand a given position. This would allow for the continued growth of one's belief system while ensuring that one's client-needs are better met.

As therapists, any penetration of our evolving therapeutic philosophy would beg the question: "what are our goals for therapy?" For example, do we simply want to eradicate that which our client presently finds disturbing? If so, then drugs, relaxation exercises, or a paradoxical prescription may serve the purpose. Perhaps we believe that our client needs to be guided towards a deeper understanding of his symptoms in order to uncover their etiology and diffuse their present potency. In this case some form of depth analysis would frame our preferred approach. It may be that we would rather explore with our client the particular life meaning underlying his current distress and have him simply accept the value and significance of his or her suffering. An existentialist approach may be more to our liking here. Whether a given therapist chooses to deal directly with a set of symptoms or probe their hidden meaning will be largely a function of his or her guiding philosophy.

What seems to stand out is that if he clarifies for himself where he is coming from philosophically, the therapist can better determine where he wants to go

therapeutically. Yalom (1980) offers the following observations regarding a therapist's personal philosophy or belief system:

> The therapist's belief system provides consistency to his or her remarks to clients; it permits the therapist to know what to explore and what not to push, so that he does not confuse the client. A belief system grounded...in the deepest levels of being has the particular advantage of conveying to the client that there are no taboo areas (p.191).

Frankl echoes similar sentiments when he suggests that: "a sound philosophy of life may be the most valuable asset for a therapist to have when treating a client in ultimate despair" (1967, p. 63).

As suggested earlier, there can be too much rigidity in one's particular philosophical stance, the reverse also being true. To illustrate, too little certainty regarding one's belief system might preclude formation of the necessary bond of trust between client and therapist. On the other hand, when one's personal stance becomes too rigid important data that would fail to fit the belief system could be distorted or rejected altogether. The tragedy here is that the therapist, who is bound by a fixed set of postulates, avoids facing and helping his client to face that uncertainty in life does exist.

By making explicit to ourselves the presuppositions underlying our personal philosophies and our clinical

approaches, we therapists can gain in several areas. First, once exposed, our presuppositions about life and psychotherapy become amenable to modification. Second, in raising them to the surface, we reduce the risk of having them operate as an undercurrent in the therapeutic encounter. Here our value system could be surreptitiously imposed on our clients eliciting an additional number of conflict areas to be dealt with. At the very least, with this procedure, we can take responsibility for the directions in which we will inadvertantly nudge them along. And finally, with our presuppositions laid bare, we can diminish the possibility of harming someone by recognizing and accepting that a given client's problem is beyond our therapeutic abilities. For example, an individual looking for meaning in his or her life may derive little from an encounter with a behavior therapist or systems strategist. Conversely, a client who has withdrawn from daily existence in response to high levels of anxiety and then armoured himself within a rigid defensive structure may receive little benefit from discussions on freedom, responsibility and authenticity.

The above, I would suggest, underlines an important issue confronting aspiring psychotherapists. Choosing from the myriad of available techniques and theoretical approaches could be a nightmarish task without the assistance of a guiding philosophy. The latter, as suggested at the outset of this section, would shape personal values

and conduct while providing the all important framework from which to evolve a basic therapeutic stance. The principal task that I have set in this thesis is to outline such a philosophy, a philosophy sustained by the basic tenets of the TPD while rooted in the existential-phenomenological tradition of priorizing experiential realities.

1.0.4 Existential-phenomenological psychology

As the hyphenated title of this section points out, existential-phenomenological psychology has resulted from the blending of two interrelated disciplines. The label existentialism refers us to the philosophical aspects of an approach that seeks to understand the human condition as it manifests itself in our concrete, lived situations. Phenomenology, according to its founder Edmund Husserl (1971), is a method which permits the study of phenomena as we actually live them in daily experience. Because of the strong similarities in world view, phenomenology has proven to be a most appropriate methodological perspective from which to examine the contents of existential philosophy (Valle & King, 1978). The existential-phenomenological school of psychology, by permitting a broader and richer perspective into the full range of human phenomena, aims to meet the needs of psychological researchers who have become disenchanted with the objective view of the natural scientific approaches and feel an obligation to cultivate an alternative in order to better examine the qualitative

aspects of human life. For discussion purposes only, each term will be taken up separately. However, the tone of this work will reflect an application of existential-phenomenology as a unity in the same tradition currently being espoused at Duquesne University, Pittsburg by such individuals as A. Giorgi, (1970; 1975), R. von Eckartsberg, (1978) and W. Fischer, (1970; 1974).

Existentialism

The existentialist viewpoint embraces an attitude which serves as an orientation to life and as a philosophy for approaching individuals. The word "existentialism" has been associated with so many different meanings that, according to writers like Sartre (1956), it no longer has any value and should be dropped altogether. Without going to that extreme it does become necessary to define one's terms while pointing to specific reference sources. "Existentialism" and "existential" as applied in this thesis will reflect the meanings originally allocated by the philosopher Kierkegaard (1941, 1944) and reinterpreted by modern psychotherapists such as May (1958), Bugental (1965) and Johnson (1971) who serve as models of the present stance of research and practice. This is a utilization of the terms that reflects the understanding of the existentially oriented practitioner which may or may not lie in agreement with the great variety of existential philosophers. The label "existential" owes its roots to the word "existence" from which the latin derivative "existo" literally means to "stand out", "to

become", "to emerge". These definitions express an understanding of human existence that is not static, but as "a becoming" and, therefore, as continually changing.

Van Kaam (1966) describes the existentialist attitude as an orientation towards individuals which is somehow present in all the major schools of psychology. One would find, for example, such an attitude expressed in the writings of a behaviorist such as Tolman, a psychoanalyst like Karen Horney, a humanist such as Carl Rogers, and an existentialist like Frankl despite publicly avowed differences. This is because one is referred to the attitudinal level at which these different theorists and practitioners communicate so that their descriptions of the qualitative aspects of human experience would make sense to each other. This attitudinal level can be considered pre-theoretical, much as is everyday language.

The existentialist viewpoint can seldom be called upon to provide direct solutions to problems. Instead, it offers a way of examining situations, a way that may lead to the discovery of necessary solutions. As an example, such an attitude could assist a therapist faced with a particular client dilemma in the selection of a most appropriate intervention strategy. He may then borrow the necessary intervention without compromise from any relevant therapeutic approach. Bugental (1965) points out that choice among theories and techniques is not a searching among a number of wrongs for a single right, but rather a selection

from among different potentialities for that which best fits. Thus the existentialist viewpoint offers a breadth of opportunity for creativity in the choice of therapy or technique. Since most therapies are associated with a particular theory, one can assume that many existentially oriented theories and therapies are possible.

Rollo May (1953), a psychoanalyst, has long ago transcended the limits of his original Freudian training by incorporating the existentialist viewpoint into his therapeutic frame of reference. His psychoanalysis has been transformed, but not abandoned, and he claims his therapeutic approach has been greatly enlarged to include a host of human experiences heretofore unattended to (May, 1961). Bugental (1965), having emerged from a similar background, has also integrated the existential viewpoint into his psychoanalytic framework and admits he now enjoys the greater possibilities of his expanded viewpoint. Richard Johnson (1971), originally steeped in the client-centered aproach, has enriched the latter through his embracing of the existential attitude in order to take advantage of its wider perspective on experience and to, in effect, increase his effectiveness as a therapist. A growing number of practitioners are now discovering the common existential core lying at the heart of most systems of psychotherapy. Individuals such as Gordon Allport (1955), D.G. Edwards (1981), and Irvin D. Yalom (1980), emerging from more traditional backgrounds, have realized that the existential

viewpoint can be fruitfully utilized with any number of theoretical conceptions and systems of psychotherapy without sacrificing their basic principles. Such existentially oriented therapists have not abandoned formal theories of development and change, but rather have freed themselves to borrow from any position that could provide guidance and understanding for client distresses not attended to in their favored paradigm.

As an existentially oriented therapist I have derived great benefit from the approaches developed by Freud (1943), Erikson (1959), Adler (1927), and Horney (1937), however, my current theoretical preference lies with the TPD (Dabrowski, 1964, 1967, 1972, 1977). The latter, as will be demonstrated throughout this work, provides the all-important framework that sustains an evolving existential belief system which also draws upon insights from previously mentioned theoretical formulations. In this sense, I too am free to use or discard aspects of therapeutic approaches that may or may not resonate with my expanding view of human experience and yet remain true to my philosophical principles.

The existentialist viewpoint wants to account for and understand all of human experience. Its embrace of any well defined theoretical formulation benefits both by first, expanding that formulations horizons in terms of breadth of human experience and, second, by enriching the existentialist viewpoint with an additional perspective in which to view the range of human functioning (Bugental,

1965). Such an integration is what I propose here for the TPD and existential-phenomenology because both have much to offer each other. To illustrate, the TPD features a comprehensive system of postulates grounded in human experience, but which have been limited by the processes of reductionism and abstraction brought about to meet the requirements of scientific validation, whereas existentialism lacks any such framework but has remained attuned to the experiential realities of everyday life. Through a dialogue with the existential-phenomenological perspective to be taken up on a number of fronts, Dabrowski's theory can have its abstracted categories relinked to their experiential correlates and perhaps rendered more meaningful to lay counselors and professionals alike. The latter in particular need models they can relate to, models which can account for the great variety of human experience without abstracting away parts of an individual from his totality, as a being-in-the-world. The existentialist viewpoint, for its part, can benefit greatly from Dabrowski's comprehensive framework of human development, a framework which sustains many of the same experiential dimensions. This will be amply demonstrated throughout the thesis, most notably in chapters three and four.

Phenomenology

The term phenomenology finds its roots in the Greek words "phenomenon" and "logos". Phenomenon literally refers

to "that which appears", or "shows itself", while logos, in Frankl's (1966) terms, refers to "meaning". Together they point to "the meaning of that which appears to an individual" underscoring the essential unity of man and his relationship to the world. This being-in-the-world can be considered a project which an individual is from birth. In this view, objects or situations have meaning and it is through these meanings that an individual can also discover the meaning of his existence.

The phenomenological researcher applies his method to the study of phenomena and their inherent meaning for man. Simply put, he is more interested in answering the "what" question regarding psychological experience rather than focusing on cause-effect relationships in attempting to determine the "why" of a particular event. In phenomenological research, when the "what" of a given phenomenon has been fully described, the "why" tends to disappear (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Giorgi, 1970).

Phenomenological psychology is not a particular school in psychology, nor is it a theoretical system. Like its philosophical counterpart, existentialism, it represents an attitude, an orientation, an approach to the study of psychological man. The following characteristics reflect the essence of this view:

1. It is a method that aims to describe as fully as possible that which appears and has meaning for man.
2. Its goal is to understand man as fully as possible

with a prime focus on experience and its qualitative exploration.

3. It rejects all reductionistic and associationistic views towards man.

4. It opposes the restriction of psychology's subject matter to behavior only.

5. It favors a holistic approach to the study of human functioning with an emphasis on the qualitative dimensions (Leahy, 1980).

In terms of research, an early example of this approach can be found in the fourth century autobiography *The Confessions*. This is where St. Augustine attempted to provide a deep and sincere account of his experiences, including all his emotions, memories and desires. Many contemporary phenomenological writers refer to this account, and Husserl himself has often cited Augustine in his books and lectures (1970). For the present purposes, the use of the phenomenological method with autobiographies as a data source has important implications. Dabrowski himself has placed great value on an individual's life history, a position shared by numerous others (e.g., Jung, 1965; Krueger, 1925; Allport, 1942). However, rather than permitting this data to speak for itself phenomenologically, Dabrowski has employed the autobiography to validate his theoretical concepts in an effort to meet the demands of the natural scientific research approach which seeks to provide empirical support through objective means only. This

particular stance proves to be especially difficult to apply to a theory as broad as the TPD which is also based on the subjective offerings of therapy clients.

The natural scientific approach to research is "method" oriented whereas the phenomenological approach priorizes "content". Experiential content is raised to the fore while the phenomenological research method recedes to the background and shapes itself to accomodate that which is under study. The resulting "structures" can then be enlisted as support or refutation of a given framework without being distorted by the latter's predefined needs. This brings up another important theme which will recur throughout the thesis, namely that the TPD as a whole could benefit from phenomenologically derived empirical support over and above the traditional research that has already been undertaken. My own researches into personality transformation (Turmel, 1981), using autobiographies as a data base, will be called upon to take up this particular point. I hope to demonstrate that, when approached phenomenologically, life histories have much to say about the empirical validity of the TPD, particularly its broader implications which will be of interest to aspiring practitioners. This particular issue will also be taken up in chapter 3.

Another important aspect of validating any new theoretical conception is to situate it within the context of what already exists. One moves to show both the similarities to and differences with existing stances while

pointing out the new directions that are suggested. Dabrowski (1972) has already taken this up to an extent by situating the TPD within the context of existing personality theories. Part of the present goal is to enlarge upon these efforts, but again in a phenomenological sense. That is, I want to provide additional evidence as to the inherent humanness of the theory by touching upon experiences that have been part of man's lore since the beginnings of recorded history.

I have already suggested how the TPD fits into the modern era in its reflection of the Angst and disintegration of the times. I also hope to situate the theory within a broader frame of reference by tracing its presence back to man's early developmental history. To accomplish this task, the classical "Myth of the Hero" will be brought into the discussion to demonstrate that the TPD has incorporated into its framework a set of experiences that seem to transcend both time and culture. By demonstrating that the TPD can be viewed as a modern psychological myth, the theory will be united with other world views captured in a variety of hero myths and thus situated in the dimension of reality Hesse (1971) refers to as "that timeless realm of the spirit". Again, this particular aspect of the discussion will have important implications for the therapeutic philosophy that is to be developed here. It is my contention that the classical "quest of the hero" is in effect an inward journey not unlike that reported by a number of schizophrenics as

well as neurotics and has been captured in the framework of the TPD. This aspect of the discussion will be taken up in chapter four.

1.0.5 Summary of present goals

The present thesis aims at answering a number of interrelated questions, questions that cannot be separated from the principal theme which is to suggest a comprehensive philosophy of development and change as a guide to the therapeutic encounter. Through dialogue with a number of existential-phenomenological positions in the areas of development, research, pathology and psychotherapy, one of my first tasks will be to demonstrate that the TPD is indeed an existential theory. Why? Because for any such theory to be of value to practitioners it must ultimately serve as part of a personal philosophy for the therapist who has need of being in constant touch with the lived realities that are represented in its scientific categories. It will be demonstrated that the TPD and existential-phenomenology share common ground in the areas of choice, responsibility, freedom, autonomy, authenticity, commitment, guilt, anxiety and suffering, parallels that become even more visible when viewed phenomenologically.

Apart from the above, a phenomenological perspective on the TPD should prove to be empirically appropriate since Dabrowski's theory is best grasped emotionally and doing existential-phnomenological research is in a sense an act of

grasping emotionally. For this and other reasons to be dealt with later, it is the present contention that the TPD and the existential-phenomenological approach are best understood via example, particularly when insisting they form the foundations of a therapeutic philosophy. For this reason, the results of researches into "personality transformation" will be presented to demonstrate that the TPD can benefit from qualitative empirical support, and to begin setting the stage for presentation of a phenomenologically based approach to psychotherapy.

The thesis is divided into two parts. Part I is concerned with the evolution of a therapeutic philosophy based on contributions from the Theory of Positive Disintegration (chapter 2), the phenomenological structure of "personality transformation" (chapter 3) and the classical "Myth of the Hero" (chapter 4). Part II will move towards the application of the philosophy which is to be further elaborated through discussions on "pathology" (chapter 5) and "psychotherapy" (chapter 6) prior to presentation of the phenomenological approach to psychotherapy which it sustains (chapter 7).

In the pages that follow, I hope to offer an alternative perspective on the TPD, one that focuses more on the qualitative aspects of its framework. Through this effort perhaps others will be stimulated to examine their personal philosophies and integrate into their approaches some of the ideas presented here. If there is any one thing

to be gleaned from the following, it is that questions regarding therapist belief systems need to be asked if practitioners hope to adequately meet modern man's psychological needs, which of necessity include their own.

PART I

Towards the Evolution of a Therapeutic Philosophy

The following three chapters concern the evolution of a therapeutic philosophy which is based on contributions from: a) the Theory of Positive Disintegration (chapter 2), b) the phenomenological structure of "personality transformation" (chapter 3) and c) the classical "Myth of the Hero" (chapter 4). The application of this philosophy will be taken up in Part II of the thesis.

2. The Theory of Positive Disintegration

2.0.1 Overview

In the introduction it was suggested that both the TPD and "existential-phenomenology" share important common ground such that Dabrowski's paradigm can be identified as an existentially oriented personality theory. In this chapter I will substantiate that claim by engaging both perspectives into a comparative dialogue in the area of development. To this end, I will first present the TPD in skeletal form so as to prepare the way for the ensuing discussion. In fact, throughout the thesis I will be referring back to this framework as I proceed to bring to light the theory's many existential dimensions. This presentation will not be exhaustive and will perhaps lack many of the subtle nuances scientists like to deal with. In keeping with my original goals, the following discussion will serve as an introduction to the TPD, one that will be sufficiently detailed to meet the current requirement of providing a guiding philosophy to the therapeutic encounter. The interested reader who may want more is referred to Dabrowski's primary works, many of which are listed in the present bibliography.

Following presentation of the TPD's basic framework, a number of existential-phenomenological views on development will be taken up with special attention being paid to the childhood years. The ensuing discussion will attend to what

is lived during various developmental phases in an attempt to provide an experiential substrate to Dabrowski's more objective categories. By integrating both points of view, that is the objective and the subjective, a more complete picture of an individual's developmental experience should emerge.

To round out this discussion, an additional perspective on the developmental process will be provided through a dialogue between Dabrowski's framework and a number of existential-phenomenological descriptions of *Passion*. The latter, as I have proposed elsewhere (Turmel, 1980), seems to be intimately tied to the process of mature human development in that its many dimensions appear to have direct counterparts in the framework of the TPD. This aspect of the discussion will provide additional experiential contact with Dabrowski's paradigm while supporting its unique status as a theory of emotional development.

The presentation of the TPD's basic framework will be a deliberate paraphrasing of Dabrowski in order to prepare the way for the on-going dialogue between his formulations and the experiential realities from which they appear to be derived. It is necessary to paraphrase Dabrowski at this early juncture because of the earlier claim that the TPD could benefit from a dialogue with existing existential-phenomenological positions on development and change. Since this thesis is in part an effort to contact the experiential realities which sustain the TPD, it seems

necessary to begin with a close approximation of Dabrowski's original stance in order to demonstrate why and how such a dialogue could be of value.

2.0.2 The Theory of Positive Disintegration

As with existentialism, the TPD expresses a philosophy of emergence, the principal claim being that development is not a linear quantitative movement, but rather is qualitative in nature. This movement can be characterized as a series of leaps from one developmental level to another, where each evidences structural and, therefore, qualitative differences from its predecessor. Borrowing from the insights of Hughlings Jackson (1932), Dabrowski maintains that the dissolution of more primitive emotional and intellectual functions is a psychic necessity before higher level forces can emerge. This destructuring of the old in favour of the new generally results in a certain amount of psychic disorganization during critical phases of developmental transition. Two of the more common life occurences are found during puberty and menopause. But there may be any number of these critical phases during an individual's lifetime which are sometimes marked by elements of psychoneurosis or psychosis.

The philosophy of positive disintegration describes development as a movement from mere reacting to one's inner experience, to choosing one's responses in light of that experience. Like the existentialists, Dabrowski wants to

emphasize the crucial importance of transcending one's deterministic forces to attain higher and higher levels of self-determination.

The theory is claimed to be descriptive of all individuals, despite the fact that few of us reach the highest developmental levels. This is due to the differing developmental potentials that are assumed to characterize each individual. Movement through the levels is a movement towards the creation of a unique unrepeatable individuality. Paradoxically, those who do reach the highest levels of individuality in the development of their personality, converge upon the same objective hierarchy of values. Dabrowski describes their achievement this way:

> Personality is a name given to an individual fully developed, both with respect to the scope and level of the most essential positive human qualities, an individual in whom all the aspects form a coherent and harmonized whole, and who posesses in a very high degree, the capability for insight into his own self, his own structure, his aspirations and aims, who is convinced that his attitude is right, that his aims are of essential and lasting value (self-affirmation) and who is conscious that his development is not yet complete and therefore is working internally on his own improvement and education (Dabrowski, 1967, p.124).

The TPD is a theory of levels of emotional development. Like most personality theories, it is a projection onto reality of a certain framework of categories in an attempt to make sense of the multiplicity of experiences that characterize development. Because of the arbitrary conceptualization of the five levels, the theory may remind one of certain stage theories such as Freud's (1943) psychosexual model, or, Erikson's (1959) psychosocial paradigm. There are a number of similarities and differences. What basically sets Dabrowski apart from Freud and Erikson is that he goes beyond biological and environmental influences which predominate in early life to take into account the role of autonomous factors which play a larger part in later growth. It is this basic point, this factor of self-determination which places the TPD into a new dimension of thinking regarding emotional and mental development. Much like the existentialists, Dabrowski believes that an individual's personality is not only shaped by genetic and environmental influences, but also by his conscious choices in view of these.

Basic assumptions

The TPD assumes the following: 1) that within man there exists a developmental instinct; 2) that this instinct's expression is governed by one's level and degree of emotional overexcitability; 3) that the transition from lower to higher levels of mental and emotional functioning cannot be achieved without pain, suffering, and sacrifice;

4) and finally, that the task of man is to perfect himself, this being accomplished under the guidance of higher emotions. The latter are described as feelings related to the highest of moral standards such as compassion, empathy, autonomy, authenticity and commitment, all of which are equally important in the existential-phenomenological view.

Dabrowski maintains that each individual, given his genetic inheritance and environmental influences, has a different potential for development. This potential is based on his particular level of psychic sensitivity or overexcitability which can take on any one of five basic forms.[2] These include psychomotor, sensual, imaginational, intellectual and emotional overexcitability of which the latter is considered most important (Dabrowski, 1972). It is out of these influences that an individual may develop a wider spectrum of feelings and increased consciousness which would encourage self-exploration and accelerated growth. Not everyone posesses these potentials in similar quantities or qualities. In fact some individuals evidence very little if any of these forms of excitability. Therefore, as far as the TPD is concerned, all men are not created equal in terms of developmental potential; equality exists rather in each individual's responsibility to maximize the talents and abilities which give expression to the various forms of

---

[2] Psychic overexcitability: "Higher than average responsiveness to stimuli, manifested by psychomotor, sensual, emotional (affective), imaginational, or intellectual excitability, or the combination thereof" (Dabrowski, 1972, p.303).

overexcitability. Let us now look at what Dabrowski means by "positive disintegration".

Disintegration itself, we are told, involves a loosening, disorganization, and oftentimes outright dissolution of mental and emotional functions (Dabrowski, Kawczak, and Piechowski, 1970). This may include temporary loosening of contact with reality due to depression, severe fatigue, or boredom. Symptoms of disintegration may be seen at times of severe crisis, such as with the loss of a loved one, at puberty, or during menopause. Positive or developmental disintegration refers again to this loosening and dissolution of functions, but occuring at certain levels of mental and emotional development to permit their regeneration and growth at higher levels. The process, Dabrowski claims, is intimately tied to the on-going evolution of values. Individuals are considered to be integrated at a particular level of development and experience disintegration of emotional functions and values during times of personal crisis. The latter are seen to provide opportunities for reevaluation of oneself where one may respond to the challenge or attempt to reintegrate back to a lower level of development.

Of the five levels in Dabrowski's theory, only three reflect the phenomenon of positive disintegration. Level 1, primary integration and level 5, secondary integration are both considered to be conflict free. But to reach level 5 from level 1 requires a rather Herculean leap which,

according to Dabrowski, cannot be accomplished without considerable pain, suffering and psychic disorganization. Let us now take a closer look at each level of the theory to see what transpires in terms of experience.

1. Primitive or primary integration

At this level, Dabrowski views an individual's mental and emotional functions as integrated into a cohesive structure dominated primarily by biological drives and instincts. These may include the self-preservation instinct as well as those of sex, hunger and aggression; even the drives for money and power are featured here as well. At this level Dabrowski claims that an individual's intelligence is completely subordinated to these drives. People integrated at this level are seen to suffer few internal conflicts while entertaining little or no awareness of their inner lives. According to Dabrowski, many modern day individuals are integrated at this level. They are often viewed as the strong stable types who appear to know what they want out of life. They are envied for their poise, their sense of direction and their general air of self-assurance. But then one is dismayed at their often visible lack of empathy, their cold-blooded intensity, in short their general impoverishment in the area of human sensitivity.

2. Unilevel disintegration

It is at the theory's second level that one first encounters the early elements of disintegration. Here are

found extended and recurring conflicts, perhaps precipitated by some particular life crisis such as puberty, menopause, or the loss of a loved one. These conflicts, Dabrowski maintains, need not be experienced consciously, but may reveal themselves as moods, obsessive thinking, or a general state of uneasiness. They are often revealed in ambivalences and ambitendencies which are characteristic of individuals experiencing conflicting emotions and drives. These conflicts are considered unilevel because mature values such as empathy, responsibility for others and commitment are as yet not involved. They appear as reactions and not choices in the face of daily experience. Resulting emotions and drives tend to collide with each other on the same horizontal plane of development not being tempered by higher order values. For example, a primitively integrated individual desirous of sexual relations may simply take what he wants without consideration of his partner's feelings on the matter, whereas a higher level individual experiencing the same urges would want to consider the implications of such action in terms of his partner's wishes and would check his desire if she were not a willing participant. It is this lack of a clearly delineated hierarchy of values which relegates many psychic conflicts to the primitive levels.

3. Spontaneous multilevel disintegration

Moving into the third level now, one comes into contact with what Dabrowski describes as the developmental dynamisms of the "inner psychic milieu" (see fig.1). These are

LEVEL V:
SECONDARY INTEGRATION

Personality
Ideal

Disposing And Directing
Center

LEVEL IV - V:
INNER PSYCHIC
TRANSFORMATION

Autonomy
And
Authentism

Responsibility
For Oneself
And For Others

Education Of Oneself
And Autopsychotherapy

LEVEL IV:
DIRECTED MULTILEVEL
DISINTEGRATION

Self-Awareness And Self-Control

Third Factor Subject-Object

CREATIVE DYNAMISMS

Positive Maladjustment

LEVEL III:
SPONTANEOUS
MULTILEVEL
DISINTEGRATION

Feelings of
Inferiority
Towards Oneself

Feelings
Of Shame
And Guilt

Dissatisfaction
With Oneself

Astonishment
With Oneself

Disquietude
With Oneself

LEVEL II

Unilevel Disintegration

LEVEL I

Primitive Integration

Figure 1 - The Inner Psychic Milieu

feelings described as forces or energies which arise spontaneously within an individual and are called dynamic because their full experience can be transformative. Examples of these are feelings of "shame and guilt" regarding one's development, feelings of "inferiority" or a sense of "dissatisfaction with oneself" for similar reasons. These may arise as part of a more generalized state called "positive maladjustment" which Dabrowski describes as an individual's protest against forced adaptation to existing societal norms, particularly norms which are negatively valued. This disintegration and its ensuing conflicts are considered to be multilevel, Dabrowski claims, because values which signal a new level of development begin colliding with lower level drives and instincts much as described in the example of sexual desire a moment ago. An individual's consciousness also begins to expand as he is called to deal with these new sources of turmoil. Eventually, at some point in this stage, there occurs a shift towards level 4 as the process of valuation matures and evolves. This particular shift is considered crucial for it is at this point that an individual foregoes the possibility of regressing to the lower levels of development.

4. Directed multilevel disintegration

According to Dabrowski, the shift from spontaneous to directed multilevel disintegration moves an individual into a level of self-directed growth. Here, one begins to take

charge of his development, consciously organizing and directing the process of disintegration towards a particular personality ideal. This is where important dynamisms such as the "third factor" and the "subject-object" in oneself make their appearance. The third factor, as suggested earlier, represents one's commitment to making conscious autonomous choices. The subject-object in oneself expresses that ability of taking an objective stance regarding one's experiences and development. It becomes manifested as self-observation and self-evaluation against the template of one's evolving personality ideal. The latter initially emerges through identification with the value stances of significant others and continues to evolve until one in effect becomes his own best critic, integrating values in the light of experience, while considering the needs and desires of one's fellow man.

5. Secondary integration

Developmental level 5 represents the outcome of the full process of positive disintegration. It consists of the integration of all mental and emotional functions into an harmonious whole which is controlled by the higher emotions such as the personality ideal, the sense of autonomy and authenticity, and the feeling of responsibility for oneself and one's fellow man (Dabrowski, 1972). Dabrowski claims that at this level an individual evidences a high degree of consciousness and awareness where his values have evolved into high moral standards and aims. This particular level of

growth, he also points out, is the characteristic achievement of many eminent individuals, referring to Ghandi, St Augustine, Kierkegaard, and Lincoln as prime examples. Reaching this level is an achievement and not a gift Dabrowski insists, since such eminence cannot be accomplished without extreme sacrifice. Achieving personality is generally a life long endeavor with many cycles of disintegration and reintegration along the way, a process which, while rich in personal satisfaction, always seems to remain incomplete.

Dynamisms of the inner psychic milieu

We will now reexamine certain dynamisms of the TPD within the context of the inner psychic milieu. Referring again to fig. 1, one can see that in this framework certain dimensions of feeling are considered to occupy a major portion of an individual's emotional environment. These dynamisms are considered to fall into three main groups. These are termed unilevel, multilevel and those of secondary integration. Recall that unilevel dynamisms comprise mainly ambivalences and ambitendencies which are not immediately related to the process of positive disintegration. Only those dynamisms of the second and third groups figure here and are included as part of the inner psychic milieu. The multilevel dynamisms of the second group are considered to be spontaneous and lacking of any definite organization. Included here are "astonishment with oneself" and "disquietude with oneself" which, when experienced, are seen

to challenge the structure of primitive integration. Disatisfaction with oneself results in the formation of a dualistic transformative attitude which manifests itself as the subject-object dynamism at the next level of development, that is the ability to stand back and look at one's experience and then respond in a growth enhancing manner.

The above feelings, along with those of "inferiority" and of "shame and guilt" fall under Dabrowski's general category of "positive maladjustment" which represents one's inner protest against forced adaptation to societal norms, particularly those that are incongruent with one's evolving life philosophy or belief system. Positive maladjustment, Dabrowski claims, results from a strongly felt desire for accelerated growth aimed at "what ought to be" as opposed to "what already is". This is another way of describing an individual's personal dissatisfaction with his current development in view of what is possible given growing recognition of one's abilities and talents and how one's role models have actualized similar potentials for themselves.

Many of the above dynamisms or feelings are considered highly creative as well. They grow out of insight into the many contradictions between one's inner experience and the outer realities that give rise to it. These feelings may inspire one to try and expand personal awareness while serving as an important outlet for the release of tension

brought about by their inherent conflicts. In this particular role, Dabrowski also considers them as forces of defense against mental illness, in that growing ability to meet their challenge provides a kind of immunization from more severe distresses, a point unaccounted for in most other views.

Moving on, we encounter dynamisms or feelings whose experience may inspire one to organize and reshape the process of multilevel disintegration in preparation for secondary integration. Here one contacts new levels of "self-awareness" and "self-control", the increasing ability to objectively reflect on oneself, the factor of conscious autonomous choosing, all of which represent a)one's awareness of a personal identity, b) the practice of self-observation, and c) the functions of affirmation, negation, and choice towards newly emerging values. The growing ability to make conscious autonomous choices is also considered to give rise to feelings of identification and empathy. The latter represents that collection of feelings which connect us to our fellow human beings. In its entirety, this process can be characterized as a form of "existential reflection" where an individual draws upon his or her personal experience with pain and suffering in order to better understand and assist others undergoing similar trials. The development of this ability is particularly important for counselors and therapists and will be dealt with again later.

The growing ability to make clear autonomous choices also influences the emergence of two other important dynamisms, "education-of-oneself" and "autopsychotherapy". These abilities become manifest as an individual disengages himself from his lower levels to begin fulfilling the need to take charge of his development. Self-education as a process is intimately tied to positive development and requires a high degree of personal authenticity coupled with persistent reference to one's personality ideal. Authopsychotherapy for its part is merely self-education under conditions of extreme stress such as what may occur during a developmental crisis, life trauma, or psychoneurosis.

The above experiences are central to the on-going process of positive disintegration which, at level four, is also referred to as "inner psychic transformation". Involving an active role on the part of consciousness, the process, in a broad sense, sees one eliminating reactions, habits and urges which fail to agree with one's evolving personality ideal. Dabrowski includes here the processes of prospection and retrospection which point forward towards "what ought to be" and back to "what has been achieved" as one takes more and more responsibility for his on-going development.

The dynamisms of the third group overlap between those described above and those that move one into the realm of secondary integration. "Responsibility for oneself and

others" is most important among these. Representing the sense of one's uniqueness and identity, it requires that others be treated as autonomous, authentic and inviolable individuals. Responsibility for others is fulfilled by using oneself as an example rather than issuing directions, while paying attention to their needs through empathy and a readiness to assist. "Autonomy", "authentism" and the "disposing and directing center" are equally of prime importance here. Again resulting from the influence of the third factor (conscious autonomous choosing), autonomy reflects one's sense of inner freedom, authenticity suggests one is confidently moving towards his own best interests (which includes a felt obligation towards one's fellow man), and the disposing and directing center is assumed to represent one's growing ability for self-control and self-direction.

Each dynamism of the inner psychic milieu can be analogized to a path up a mountain. Many of these trails eventually merge and form new paths or dynamisms at the higher levels where the approaching summit begins to shrink in circumference. These new paths carry the essential characteristics of their predecessors which now have been integrated and transformed into more sophisticated versions (e.g. the "third factor" and "subject-object" evolving into the "disposing and directing center"). What is important to note is that, despite these necessary fluctuations, all paths lead to the top of the mountain which offers the same

view of the evolving personality ideal no matter how one gets there. At the lower levels, this dynamism is visible as imitation, that is an individual's identification with significant others such as an older sibling, a parent, or a popular hero of sport or film. The "personality ideal" of the inner psychic milieu emerges during multilevel disintegration and crystallizes into its more mature form as an individual's differing aims and potentials become more and more interrelated and converge. The personality ideal then emerges as the central focus of one's aspirations and aims, serving as a guide in an individual's on-going process of growth, a process that is considered never complete.

The TPD was born out of Dabrowski's nearly forty years of clinical practice. The postulation of levels of development and the so-called "developmental dynamisms" came from the synthesis of biographical information provided by his clients and a review of the experiences of a number of eminent individuals. The various levels of the theory are not age specific as is found with Piaget, Freud, or Erikson. Once a child has differentiated himself from the environment, his particular developmental potential may be exercised immediately. Just as one may readily find primitively integrated adults, one may also encounter cases of unilevel or multilevel disintegration in sensitive children, although such cases are considered exceptional.

As suggested at the outset of this chapter, this presentation of the TPD would not be exhaustive but

sufficiently detailed to meet the current aim of developing a guiding therapeutic philosophy. Part of this process now requires that certain aspects of Dabrowski's theory be more fully explained as well as attending to dimensions of experience not expanded upon in his paradigm. To accomplish this, certain existential-phenomenological perspectives on development will be presented and then engaged in a dialogue with the TPD to further clarify its many existential dimensions.

2.0.3 Existential-Phenomenology and the TPD

Existentialists would have little difficulty accepting Dabrowski's basic assumptions regarding human development, for these permeate their own philosophy as well. They also view choice in freedom as an important human dimension and self-perfection as a worthy aspiration. They would, however, be uncomfortable with Dabrowski's postulation of dynamisms as the building blocks of development. For the existential-phenomenologist, the development of personality can never be fixed through a system of constructs, but is a process, a becoming, an emergence which is never static and never complete. The process of development is shaped by one's experience, particularly one's choices in view of that experience. Dabrowski's descriptions of observed patterns of experiencing characterizing higher level development would not necessarily be objected to in the existential view, but when translated into a system of hypothetical constructs

they would be viewed as abstractions from daily existence and therefore less meaningful.

For the existential-phenomenologist, existence can best be understood as "being-in-the-world". This hyphenated phrase is intended to underscore the essential unity that man is considered to be in relation to the world. In this sense existentialists reject Cartesian dualism by their suggestion that man cannot be considered apart from the world in which he lives. To describe him is to describe his relationship to the world.

Man is considered to exist in relationship to three levels of his world. These are called *Umwelt*, *Mitwelt*, and *Eigenwelt* in German (Binswanger, 1963; Boss, 1963). Umwelt describes man's relationship to the biological and physical aspects of his world and is therefore similar to the TPD's first factor. Mitwelt refers to man's interpersonal relationships, that is his being-with-others and is not unlike Dabrowski's second factor of environmental influences. And finally, one might recognize the factor of self-determination in the existential description of Eigenwelt which literally means "own-world" and refers in part to how we reflect upon and evaluate personal experience. From this process emerges our choices in view of our day to day interactions with all aspects of our world. These three levels of being, although quite similar to Dabrowski's three factors, are somewhat different because of the existential-phenomenological assertion that man is

immersed in the unity of existence, that is man is a being-in-the-world and cannot be understood without consideration of this. What Dabrowski and existentialism share are the three levels of being which influence one's presence in that context.

There are certain givens in human existence such as one's body, one's environment and one's place in history. These, in themselves, cannot be changed, but the meanings they may hold are considered open-ended. These meanings are a consequence of one's choosing in regards to available options. An individual's ability to see and entertain options may be great or small depending upon his developmental history and felt ability to choose in the face of it. Here of course an individual's level of awareness plays a crucial role in the process of development. As with Dabrowski, the existential-phenomenologist recognizes that this outcome is not merely causally determined, but intimately tied to the individual's sense of freedom to make conscious autonomous choices.

Merleau-Ponty (1962) speaks of awakening to self-hood, that is a process of self-differentiation in which a crucial shift features the development of an objectified sense of self. Identification with one's body is seen to be a necessary first step in this process (Dillon, 1978; Keen, 1970). In order to recognize himself as a discrete individual, the child, for example, must learn to take up a perspective on himself, a process of self-alienation and

self-reflection which may be an early version of Dabrowski's subject-object dynamism. The realization that the individual is simultaneously his body and a perspective on it announces that a new level of awareness has been reached.

Dabrowski's developmental paradigm offers little discussion regarding early development. On the other hand, certain existential-phenomenologists pay close attention to the formative years and provide some of the insights required here for the current therapeutic philosophy. Keen, in his book *The Three Faces of Being* (1970), advances a rather detailed developmental theory which reflects the existential-phenomenological viewpoint.[3] The three faces of being are described as: 1)being-for-oneself, 2)being-for-others, and 3) being-in-the-world. Again the use of hyphens underscores the differing phases of unity that characterize each level of existence. These phases are part of 4 stages which an individual must negotiate starting at birth. Their presentation here is important for they provide some insight into what is being lived during childhood and how these experiences may later evolve into problem areas of functioning.

In stage 1, *Fusion*, consciousness and the world are one. There is a definite lack of differentiation in the child between what is "me" and what is "not me". Body image and object concept have yet to fully materialize. During

---

[3]Detailed in the sense that existentialists are not renowned for being concrete or very specific when accounting for important developmental experiences.

stage 2, *Separation*, which occurs during the first year of life, a child may begin to experience differentiation along the lines of "me" and "not me". The child becomes a subject and sees himself as the center of the universe. He may now discover that mother is an independent person. Here identification with one's body begins which in turn helps to define the limits of "me". This is the first face of being - "being-for-oneself".

In the third stage, *Satellization*, a crucial shift takes place. The experiences of subjectness and objectness reverse themselves. The parents become viewed as gods and the child begins to see himself as their object. He may begin to feel obligated to please them for he is weak and they are strong. At this point, Keen claims the child moves from a phase of being-for-oneself to the second face "being-for-others". The reality of newly discovered powerlessness seems to cast doubt over the child's sense of omnipotence. The latter learns to reevaluate his status in light of this awareness to ensure that survival needs will be met without upsetting the authority figures in his life.

At about age seven, stage 4, *Similarity*, begins. Here the child discovers that his parents have parents. Multiple centers of subjectivity now begin to emerge, not unlike Dabrowski's notion of "many wills", as first evidence of the "disposing and directing center". Peers play a more important part in the child's self-exploration, yet this is never quite separate from his experiences in relation to the

family. The grade school years are replete with immensely complex mixtures of "satellization" and "similarity" involving one's parents, siblings, and peers. Conflicts arise as more and more options become available because choices must be made despite limited information. These conflicts are usually experienced in relation to rules and are somewhat analogous to those experienced during unilevel disintegration. The difference is that in Dabrowski's second level one is also plagued by moods and obsessive thinking and resulting ambivalences and ambitendencies, experiences which will have even greater impact on the child in his upcoming adolescence.

Identification now presses forward as an important aspect during this phase of development. It can be described as a process of self-definition in terms of one or many models. These may include a parent, but not uncommonly a peer, movie hero, or sports figure, even intellectual heroes figure here as well. Dabrowski expands on this concept with his postulation of the personality ideal. An individual, in defining himself, may identify with a number of available models, both real and mythical, as development through adolescence proceeds. But in reaching for the highest levels, these models may dissolve into, or, blend with personal aspirations to form a personality ideal. The latter then emerges as the primary focal point and yardstick against which to evaluate and choose newly materializing values. One is now moving into the realm of

being-in-the-world.

It is at this point where the TPD and existential-phenomenology begin to converge. I have already touched upon some of the areas where important parallels are to be found. Dabrowski's "third factor", for example, becomes visible in the existential issue of "conscious autonomous choosing"; his "subject-object" dynamism relates to the experiences of "self-alienation" and "self-reflection"; while the whole process of "positive disintegration" appears to be intimately tied to "existential suffering" and "atonement". There are a number of other experiential areas shared by the two positions which are also ripe for discussion at this time.

Guilt and anxiety

The process of successfully achieving a healthy identity early in life is contingent upon the presence of warm and loving parents or models. These are necessary to cultivate an atmosphere of openness which permits and encourages exploration and risk-taking on the part of the child in the face of life's many options. One's being-as-a-subject, an aspect of which is evaluative, requires a healthy grounding in decision making experiences which, in turn, invites more and more options. If one's models are cruel and punishing, then the field of options may be severely narrowed as the child feels forced to shift towards a mode of being-for-others. The time and effort spent appeasing authority figures and trying to second guess

their whims is unavailable for confronting and dealing with new situations. One's being-for-others gets raised up while the experience of oneself as an agent becomes restricted. The stage may now be set for the emergence of pathological guilt and its companion anxiety which, when present in certain proportions, may lead to the distortion or crippling of one's own forces.

Existentialists speak of two kinds of guilt: 1) guilt for what one has done, and 2) guilt for what one is (Kierkegaard, 1941). Dabrowski posits two similar types of experiences: 1) guilt over one's personal failures, and 2) guilt over oneself. For both Dabrowski and the existentialists the first type of guilt may arise when one realizes that he has chosen badly, that basically he has not lived up to standards formerly internalized. This kind of guilt is usually cast from oneself as a subject and is considered normal in the existential view (Kierkegaard, 1941). The second type of guilt, however, reduces one to the status of object. Guilt here is not related to a specific incident or failure, but is generalized to one's total being. It reflects a fundamental stance characterized by self-hatred and an orientation towards undermining one's abilities (see K. Horney, 1937). This pathological aspect of guilt and anxiety is clearly visible in many neuroses and most psychoses. Here, one's total self is always at stake in the success or failure of any individual act. Generally a consequence of being stuck in the "satellization" stage,

this guilt results from a heavy investment in being-for-others. Recall that being-for-others emerges when appeasing one's authority figures appears as a psychological necessity during the early stages of self-differentiation and the discovery of personal powerlessness. Pathology results from being stuck at some aspect of this stage, a theme to be expanded on in chapter 5.

For Dabrowski, on the other hand, the emergence of guilt may have a positive connotation, particularly when such guilt signals the onset of "spontaneous multilevel disintegration" which is considered a necessary first step to higher development. This is especially true in reference to the guilt one experiences as a subject. However, for Dabrowski, even the second type of guilt may have positive consequences for its presence is seen to reflect a level of sensitivity from which the potential for higher development springs. The type and severity of the guilt would identify a particular level of development. Its most debilitating form would be experienced during "unilevel disintegration". Here, a therapeutic intervention could be necessary to shift the experience of oneself as an "object" to that of "subject". Freed from the paralyzing effects of such guilt and anxiety, one could then move forward through his choices, an indication of positively oriented development in both Dabrowski's and the existential-phenomenological point of view.

Freedom, responsibility and authenticity

In existential philosophy, "choosing one's self" is viewed as a basic and necessary step towards freedom (May, 1953). This is Kierkegaard's phrase which affirms that one has responsibility for his self and his existence. There can be no real freedom without responsibility. Individual freedom is also tied to a daily commitment. "He only earns his freedom and existence who daily conquers them anew" (Goethe, in R. May, 1953). The authentic person becomes deeply involved with his ultimate life commitments and, therefore, deeply immersed in the whole process of "being".

Freedom, responsibility and authenticity are of central concern in existential psychotherapy and are of primary importance to the TPD as well. Authenticity is here revealed as the degree to which an individual becomes reconciled to his own best interests by taking responsibility for the development of recognized talents and abilities and demonstrating concern for the needs and desires of others. Included here is the ability to recognize these needs with a minimum of distortion by tuning in to one's reactions to various choices or commitments. Guilt and anxiety are here considered first stage alarms. Authenticity is equated with self-honesty in view of these recognized needs while being intimately tied to the concept of personal responsibility.

Authenticity also involves the resolution of inner dividedness through the overcoming of internal conflicts. In a large sense this is what Dabrowski means by disintegration

and reintegration and what Kierkegaard refers to when discussing suffering and atonement (at-one-ment, as a return to unity). Authenticity springs from the successful resolution of personal crises which often precipitate these periods of disintegration and suffering. Resolution carries with it a sense of release which in turn can be felt as increased freedom.

Creativity also arises out of an individual's sense of increased freedom. Creativity, as both existentialism and the TPD suggest, does not simply refer to the public creations of artists, but includes that inner creativity which is the potential of every invidivual. Creativity in this regard becomes revealed as an essential ingredient in the whole process of higher development. Note for example in fig. 1 that there are broader categories entitled "creative dynamisms" which encompass the core of the TPD's "inner psychic milieu". Creativity in this sense expresses the struggle of an individual who aims to give birth to his uppermost potentialities and commit himself to certain ultimate life concerns. The latter, growing into awareness as responsibility for oneself and others, may then be attended to in response to a general sense of obligation, much like Adler's notion of "social interest".

This commitment to helping others can also be described as an enterprise of love. This existential love becomes an expression of one's whole being in relation to all being and describes the level 5 individual in Dabrowski's paradigm.

Love in this sense means that such an individual participates in all existence. This aspect of love, I submit, becomes the avenue through which an eminent individual expresses his faith, commitments, and creativity while pursuing freedom, responsibility, and personal authenticity.

If the issues of choosing oneself, authenticity, commitment, creativity, love and freedom are important developmentally, then they must be therapeutic necessities as well. This will become more apparent later on as these experiences become contextualized in the structure of "personality transformation" to be presented in the next chapter. For the present, it appears that a number of parallels exist between the TPD and existential-phenomenology on these important dimensions.

2.0.4 Passion in personality development

The presentation and explication of the TPD will be taken one step further at this time into the realm of affective experiencing. What I want to emphasize in this section is Dabrowski's unique position on emotional development and its participation in the growth process. In lieu of "emotions" the term "passion" as a special meaning of affect will be used and existential-phenomenological descriptions of the latter will be engaged in a dialogue with the framework of the TPD. As proposed elsewhere (Turmel, 1980), passion is both a motive force and emotional

state which seems intimately tied to the process of mature human development. This becomes especially apparent when descriptions of passion are dialogued with Dabrowski's theory.

Background

Over the years there has evolved a multiplicity of views regarding *Passion*. These have ranged from passion as an "evil force" lurking below in man's unconscious and erupting at the most inopportune times, to passion as a valuable source of power without which man could accomplish little or nothing. My own researches into the experience aimed to sort out these divergences while attempting to situate passion within the sphere of personality development. Close examination of descriptions of passion provided a profile of the experience that tended to support the claim that passion is indeed involved in the process of higher level personality development.

It is when descriptions of passion are applied to an individual's emotional and valuing experiences that its relationship to personality development becomes revealed. For example, Mounier (1947) conceives of passion as the powerful directedness of a personality via a dominant tendency; Le Senne (1945) describes the passionate man as an individual who wants to transform both himself and the world; and McNamara (1977) sees passion as the fusion of faculties into a unified drive towards a supreme value. When we add to this Solomon's (1976) question "apart from our

passions do we have any personalities at all?", and McNamara's suggestion that "if we are passionate, all of our human potentialities can be activated and integrated into a fresh and lively personality", the possibility becomes even more convincing.

Rony (1967) helps bring the point home, while clearing some confusion in the process, with his distinction of the large and narrow sense of passion. In the large sense, passion is the putting in order of one's affective life under the direction of a dominant value or tendency, and in the narrow sense, passion is an emotional state by which an affected individual may sense he is torn from himself (divided) and reduced to certain actions in response to experiences which he often does not not understand the cause (e.g. disintegration). One may recognize here that passion can be at once a dominant tendency (e.g. personality ideal) under which individual tendencies (e.g. dynamisms) may manifest themselves, become organized and then be directed towards this ultimate purpose.

As this section aims to demonstrate, such a dual view of passion must be grasped if one hopes to begin appreciating its involvement in personality development. More importantly, such a view proves to be quite compatible with the TPD. Some further descriptions of passion from the existential-phenomenological perspective now seem necessary before proceeding with a comparison to Dabrowski's theory.

The world of passion

Jager (1978, 1979) provides a rather concise and in depth look into the world of passion. In both *Towards a phenomenology of the passions* and *Dionysos and the world of passion* the realm of passionate experiencing is explored. We enter a world that speaks everywhere of passion's dual nature, being at once "passive and active", a "cleavage and a healing", a "disintegration and reintegration". We are surrounded by the unpredictable, by risk, and by possibility.

To gaze into this world and understand it, one must first be reminded of its counterpart, the world of the everyday, the world of surfaces. We are referred here to that which we share with others, where we are present to what is intelligible and predictable, where we are rooted in language and custom, and where we are anchored to our daily self-evident tasks. It is the upsurge into this world that characterizes passion's intrusiveness. The world of the day to day is interrupted when passion as pattern and meaning brings discontinuity, upheaval, and disintegration. 'Passion's world is brooding and inward turning. One is challenged here to focus on himself, and to acknowledge this upsurging depth that wells up from within. One may be grasped by a desire for sexual satisfaction, become aware of a growing resentment, or find himself present to a new and important value. Passion seems to move us between points in life which are not easily negotiated by willpower or logic

alone.

Passion, as a driving force, seems to underly our instincts, emotions and values (Solomon, 1976). Individual passions can be either positive or negative. For example, one can be passionately obsessed with a particular resentment as well as with a life enhancing commitment. The focus here is on passion's influence in positive personality development.

Passion is the upsurgence of depth, the insurrection of the flesh, the arising of the anonymous. Passion is always a form of upswelling, its world seemingly structured around the advent of an "apocalypse" (Jager, 1979). Passion initiates, then awaits the reversal of depth and surface. It anticipates what Jager calls a "creative destruction", an event quite reminiscent of "positive disintegration".

Passion is at first a filling up, a gathering, a stiffening until a crisis is reached where either by choice or acceptance one then finds himself swept to another dimension of feeling. The sexual act demonstrates this each time with its filling and swelling, moving one towards crisis, until poised on the brink of orgasm, one suddenly finds himself swept away, out of control, transported into another realm. At this basic level passion has a deterministic quality which can be tempered as one gains the ability and strength to check one's desires especially if these violate personal values. In terms of pure sexuality, however, passion's expression seems more deterministic.

In our emotional life an example of this can be found in anger, where we often greedily soak up insults and injustices until a moment of crisis is reached. We may then erupt into a fury and spend ourselves, again repeating the process of being transported from a realm of mounting tension, through explosive discontinuity, before returning to a state calm. When one looks at passion's latin derivative "patior", which means suffering, one may begin to understand this analogy of a strenuous movement between two discontinuous realms. In Aristotelian usage, passion as "affliction" or "seizure" always implied such a suffering (McNamara, 1977).

This "Crisis of Passage" which characterizes passion's upheaval is usually accompanied by anxiety. The latin "angustiae", from which anxiety is derived, literally refers to "narrow straits". Failing to achieve passage through these straits means to be caught between two realms, not unlike being stuck between unilevel and multilevel disintegration which, Dabrowski suggests, can happen before higher levels of growth are contacted. The anxiety inherent in the world of passion makes many of us wish to escape to the world of the predictable, the secure world of our everyday tasks.

Some constituents of passion

As part of its dual nature, passion reveals itself to be both "passive"and "active"(Strasser, 1977). By passive, I refer to the sense in which the self does not produce the

experience via will alone, and active in the sense that the arising of a passion demands a response. One is challenged to acknowledge passion and then attempt to reconcile the division it creates within us, or one may try to suppress the feeling as often happens in a neurosis. Passion in a sense arises of itself, inviting us to participate in its demands, and hence make it part of our self-determination. Passion in this sense seems to inspire our actions by at once being their source and then determining their style.

Passion is spontaneous, revealing itself as a kind of fate, or fate of change (Jager, 1978). One's first movement into passion is neither the result of confrontation or decision, but rather a yielding to seduction. Returning to sexuality for a moment, one sees in orgasm the gradual unfolding of just such a fate. It proceeds through the coming to terms of a process whose initial invitation summons us away from the routine center of our lives. "Eros", the Greek word for passion, refers us to the art of making love, and urges man to transcend himself "by soaring into realms of the spirit through symbols of the flesh" (McNamara, 1977). We are invited to participate, and in so doing, give ourselves over to a process which has the possibility of taking wing on its own.

Passion and the TPD

One important assumption that Dabrowski has made lies in the claim that we are born with a developmental instinct and that this instinct is more than a basic drive. It is an

indicator of one's potential to transcend his biological life cycle and transform his psychological type. I wish to focus on two key words here, "transcend" and "transform". Strasser (1977) when discussing passion speaks of a "basic transcending comportment". I believe he is referring here to an attitude in which we take up and transform our talents and abilities through our choices within the framework of our genetic and social inheritance. This is an attitude which regards change as indispensible to growth. Le Senne (1934) offers a similar view: "passion is an experience of drive toward that which is beyond the self". To be passionate in this broad sense is to both transcend and transform. One passionately transcends his biological life cycle, while transforming his psychological type not unlike what is experienced during "inner psychic transformation".

Dabrowski also claims that an individual must be possessed of one or more types of "psychic overexcitability" to assure the full expression of his developmental instinct. I am inclined to subsitute "passion" or "passionateness" as the same prerequisite to higher growth. Passionateness seems to capture that essential human quality of being driven by intellectual, imaginational or emotional pursuits which move one towards higher and higher levels of self-differentiation and growth.

Another basic assumption of the TPD states that any movement from lower to higher levels of mental and emotional functioning cannot be achieved without pain, suffering, and

sacrifice. Suffering as we saw earlier is also at the heart of passion. Psychic pain, conflict and anxiety are always to be found in the void between passion's emergence into awareness and the ensuing challenge it issues to act. That this generally constitutes a crisis of passage seems to capture the essence of what Dabrowski has described as disintegration and reintegration.

Returning to the TPD's five stages at this time we begin to see even more similarities between the constituents of passion and the theory's dynamic structure.

Recall that disintegration itself involves a loosening, disorganization or dissolution of mental and emotional functions (Dabrowski, Kawczak, & Piechowski, 1970). Analogous to this would be passion's upheaval, cleavage, and discontinuity of an individual's routine centeredness (Jager, 1978). To break out of unilevel disintegration, Dabrowski claims, requires critical self-reflection. Reflecting proves to be equally important when dealing with our passions. Reflecting permits apprehension of a passion's full meaning, its appropriateness, and its value for growth (Solomon, 1976).

Experiencing a strong passion, like the process of disintegration, results in a severence of life's continuity which brings forth conflict, pain and suffering. When one considers the arrival of puberty, one can see here in Dabrowski's terms a smashing of the structures of primitive integration which again results in conflict, pain and

suffering. The adolescent becomes involved in a crisis of passage from childhood to adulthood. A similar crisis is experienced with every passion as is the case with each cycle of disintegration and reintegration.

The appearance of developmental dynamisms at level three of Dabrowski's paradigm seems to be analogous to passion's passive-active nature where a strong feeling must emerge of itself before it can be acted upon. Both dynamisms and passions are spontaneous in the sense that neither is summoned by will alone; they grow partly out of prior experience, as well as in response to projected needs. As with passion, emerging feelings of inferiority or dissatisfaction with oneself tend to sever the continuity of routine daily life. One's ambivalences and ambitendencies are invited to dissolve in view of the important challenges being made upon one's existence.

Dynamisms are experiential we are told, one feels them move up from the depths, disturbing our surface calm, just as passion's upheaval turns us around to face a new demand. Dynamisms have the power to transform, Dabrowski claims, just as each of our passions can challenge the status quo and invite further possibilities for our growth.

While recognizing the transformative power of individual dynamisms and passions, one may also be reminded of their broader implication as in the dynamism of "inner psychic transformation" which for Dabrowski is intimately involved in the process of "positive disintegration". As

mentioned earlier, this dynamic is also present in passion which can be at once a dominant tendency, or an individual state among many oriented towards that tendency.[4] In passion's terms, this description seems to capture the essential flavour of "inner psychic transformation" as a process oriented towards the personality ideal.

In the TPD what distinguishes multilevel from unilevel disintegration is an individual's emerging hierarchy of values. This evolution and growth mark a new era in personal development. Values are born of dynamisms just as they seem to spring from one's passions. Values reflect one's mode of presence to the world, and in so doing feed back energy towards the renewal of passion. Values in this sense serve to attenuate the individual strategies of our passions and the latter, once renewed, raise values to even greater heights. This may help explain in Dabrowski's terms how the overexcitabilities continue to regenerate themselves as the process of growth evolves.

Entering level 4 of self-directed growth, an individual finds himself drawn into an era of highly accelerated development. The presence of dynamisms such as the third factor (conscious autonomous choosing) and the subject-object in oneself (self-reflection) reflects the

---

[4] This is also what Arthur Koestler has described as the Janus effect. "The members of a hierarchy, like the Roman god Janus, all have two faces looking in opposite directions: the face turned towards the subordinate levels is that of a self-contained whole; the face turned upwards toward the apex, that of a dependent part. One is the face of the master, the other the face of the servant" (*The Ghost in the Machine*, 1967, p. 48).

organizational ability of an individual at this level of development. This of course results from the many challenges confronted at the earlier levels where a number of dynamic feelings began to arise and then converge as they became aligned with the requirements of the personality ideal. One can recognize this same organizing power in passion. Individual passions, much as Dabrowski's developmental dynamisms, may begin to cooperate with each other under the guidance of a dominant passion. What must be stressed here is the peculiar operation of passion which becomes manifest as a polarization of structures. Passion's modalities can include both a passive and active component which serve to divide and then reunite the affected individual. This polarization is generally experienced as a pressure for change which challenges the individual to act. It is in the harnessing and directing of passion's great power towards a particular goal that an individual distinguishes himself as passionately self-directed. As Strasser points out, "one who is passionate is also able to govern himself, he is disciplined in many respects in order to dedicate himself all the more unreservedly to a single thing (1977, p. 238)".

The outcome of the full process of positive disintegration emerges at level 5 which is called secondary integration. This particular level of personal attainment could equally be characterized as the focal point of one's dominant passion. Dabrowski describes it as an achievement and, I would add, the culmination of a passion filled

struggle. An individual's personality ideal grows out of his developmental experience and choices, much like a dominant passion emerges as a focal point through daily contact with one's emotions and values. To reach developmental level five, one has to muster all his strength and energy and devote himself unreservedly to the goal of personal enrichment. In the process, individual dynamisms or passions will become aligned, like iron filings on a magnet, while drawing one towards this singular purpose. Such an unrelenting effort serves to shape the personality in view of that goal and eventually may give rise to what Dabrowski has described as an eminent individual.

Passion appears to be a vital force necessary to an individual's on-going personality development. The current dialogue between the TPD and a number of phenomenologically revealed features of passion appear to support the claim. I feel that Dabrowski's theory of positive disintegration reflects man's passionate struggle to create himself by responding to the demands of his inborn nature and then transcending these through free choice in an ever evolving journey towards his particular ideal. The latter in turn bears the stamp of his commitment towards himself and all existence while reflecting an act of faith that, spiritually speaking, brings him to life.

Passion, I would further suggest, is life's fire and like real fire, serves as one of nature's transforming agents. "Fire is a process of transformation and change by

which material elements are rejoined into new combinations" (Bronowski, 1973, p. 89). Passion, as the fuel of "inner psychic transformation" and, as man's inner fire, proves to be essential to higher level development. Legend has it that the Phoenix is continually reborn through the heat of fire which permits him to live on, generation after generation. The overexcitable individual is himself on fire be it intellectually, emotionally and/or imaginally. He is, in the present terms, passionate. And, it is by so being, that he moves to transform himself, the world, or both into something more meaningful for all.

2.0.5 Summary

Through dialogue with a number of existential-phenomenological perspectives on development and passion the TPD is revealed to be an existentially oriented personality theory. The point to be made is that the TPD, by virtue of its unique focus on emotional development, its appreciation of key experiential dimensions, and its conceptualization of multilevelness in development has much to offer the current therapeutic philosophy. The latter, as pointed out earlier, must include a comprehensive framework which reflects the lived realities of an individual's developmental challenge.

A unique feature of the TPD was revealed in the suggestion that symptoms of the psychoneuroses can have positive developmental consequences; in fact, these are

considered unavoidable to that end. The inherent value of suffering through disintegration was shown to lie at the heart of existential philosophy as well and, along with passion, was revealed as one of numerous points of contact that connect the TPD with existentialism. What differences there are only points up the benefits of being well acquainted with both viewpoints, for the weaknesses of one may be offset by the strengths of the other.

Of singular importance to the present purposes is Dabrowski's concept of multilevelness. With this tool, a therapist no longer needs to be handicapped by descriptions of experience as unitary phenomena which do not always capture the multidimensional nature of a client's lived realities (e.g. DSM III). Armed with an appreciation for the multilevel possibilities of an individual's awareness, experience and behavior, therapists in particular may feel freer to move about in the multitude of therapeutic modalities that are currently available without sacrifice of their basic principles. To further appreciate this possibility, we will now examine some of the evidence that qualitatively supports the TPD as an accurate reflection of mature human development and, therefore, as a valuable guiding framework in the therapeutic encounter.

3. Personality Transformation

3.0.1 Overview

Personality theorists such as Freud, Erikson and Dabrowski appear as the psychological spokespersons of their age, attempting to meet human needs as these become visible in the prevailing Zeitgeist. They can be also be viewed as artists, their medium or artform being psychological theorizing. An artist speaks to the aesthetic heart of his cultural milieu, while the personality theorist attempts to bring creative order to the great variety of experiences that influence development and change.

The value of any given theoretical conception is often realized long before rigorous supporting evidence becomes available. This has been true of both Freud's and Erikson's stances (Becker, 1973). Practitioners generally move quickly to integrate into their approaches a system of postulates that is substantiated by their therapeutic and personal experiences. Conversely, many practitioners will discard a theoretical conception that has been supported by numerous natural scientific investigations because it does not satisfy this basic existential test. For the present purposes, the TPD enjoys both existential and empirical support. Having many of its basic assumptions confirmed by personal experience, its broader implications have also been substantiated by qualitatively oriented research as will be demonstrated in this chapter.

In the following pages I will bring to light the lived realities that sustain the current therapeutic philosophy while at the same time offering experiential support for the TPD. I will begin with a brief discussion on the value of quantitative vs qualitative research and then present an experiential correlate to Dabrowski's theory in a form identified as the phenomenological structure of "personality transformation" (Turmel, 1981). To round out the chapter, a brief discussion on the experiences of "repentance and rebirth" will be taken up since they emerge as an inherent part of the transformation experience and, therefore, have important implications for the phenomenological approach to therapy being presented later on.

3.0.2 Quantitative vs qualitative methods in human research

> Even though, for the verification of data, science prefers instruments and distrusts the mind, there never has been, nor will there ever be, an instrument superior to the mind which creates instruments as extensions of itself (Brugh-Joy, 1980, p.54).

The above quote captures the essence of a major problem in psychology today. The pursuit of accuracy and precision in human research has led to the large scale endorsement of a method that was borrowed from classical science rather than developed in response to a mandate that, theoretically at least, would require full exploration of all our human

realities. During the course of applying this method to human research, scientists have lost touch with its limitations and chose to either ignore or modify phenomena that could not be fitted into its framework (Keen, 1975; Maslow, 1966; 1970).

Many modern day researchers have issued a challenge to this prevailing view and have given notice of their dissatisfaction with the method's strictly objective orientation particularly when applied to human experience. Individuals such as Gordon Allport (1953), Abraham Maslow (1966) and Irvin D. Yalom (1980) began expressing their doubts when confronting areas of human experiencing that were of interest and importance, yet were being ignored. For example, "peak experiences", "self-actualization", "love" and "understanding" have received only modest attention in the research literature despite their obvious importance to both practitioners and lay persons alike (Maslow, 1966). This has resulted in a growing body of researchers who today are expanding their interests to include the phenomenological point of view.

As stated in the introduction, natural scientific psychology is method oriented whereas the phenomenological approach requires that its methods be molded to accomodate the data source and the phenomenon under investigation. Natural scientific psychology employs the statistical paradigm to establish the significance of findings, while phenomenology aims at uncovering emerging themes, patterns

of meaning or the structure of a named phenomenon. Natural scientific research aims at explaining the "why" of a particular phenomenon through the establishment of cause-effect relationships, where phenomenology's orientation is to fully describe the "whatness" of an event or experience.

The statistical method of the natural sciences is part of man's striving for accuracy and this mandate of preciseness leaves little room for ambiguity. Life unfortunately, is filled with ambiguity, a fact that manifests itself every where, especially in our feelings, aspirations and ultimate aims. Maslow offers the following caution to those researchers who would prefer only natural scientific psychology's sophisticated paradigms:

> It seems...that...prediction, control, rigor, certainty, exactness, preciseness, neatness, orderliness, lawfulness, quantification, proof, explanation, validation, reliability, organization etc - are all capable of being pathologized when pushed to the extreme. All of them may be pressed into the service of the safety needs, i.e., they may become primarily anxiety-avoiding and anxiety-controlling mechanisms (1966, p.30).

The obsession with non-influencing objectivity in the study of our humaness seems a bit extreme at times. Man is not some rare species of animal only found in certain remote regions of the globe and only accessible during a lunar

eclipse. Man, as the "subject" of his own inquiry, can be approached directly through verbal exchanges or through freely given records of his experiences. The problem has been that natural scientific psychology is a study of people as "objects" when the fact is that human beings live their lives as "subjects". I would agree with Maslow (1966) who points out that most psychological problems do and, therefore, should begin with phenomenology rather than with rigid laboratory techniques. From these phenomenological beginnings one can then press on towards more objective experimental methods much as Van Kaam (1966) did when investigating the phenomenon of "understanding". To begin a study of personality transformation, for example, with sophisticated statistical methods would require the researcher to be meticulous about an experience that is only crudely known. Similarly, exploring the broad implications of the TPD with the same restrictive methods could be compared to exploring a continent with a magnifying glass and tweezers.

To illustrate, in examining the literature on the TPD, I came across three research articles which aimed at analysing the relationship between "anxiety" and "self-actualization" within the context of the TPD. The first of these by G. De Grace (1974) attempted to statistically substantiate the claim that anxiety and self-actualization were positively correlated in support of Dabrowski's stance on the issue. The second investigation by

Wilkins, Hjelle and Thompson (1977) attempted to reconceptualize the issue by pointing to the flaws in De Grace's study and then, claiming to make superior use of test instruments, suggested that anxiety and self-actualization were not positively related. The third study, by Dodez, Zelhart and Markley (1981), in turn challenged the Wilkins et. al. study by demonstrating that one of the test instruments being used was biased against anxiety and, after accounting for this, offered their "improved" results in support of De Grace's original claim.

Looking back over these three studies one notices that the research came full circle on the anxiety-actualization issue. The first study, which attempted to support the TPD, was challenged by a succeeding investigation which claimed to make superior use of test instruments. This second endeavor was in turn challenged by a third investigative effort which statistically demonstrated that an important test instrument was biased against a key variable. It would appear that these investigative explorations of the TPD, while of obvious interest to the scientist, brought back little of value for the practitioner. The latter, faced with contradicting positions on an important developmental issue, would be hard pressed to decide what direction therapy for anxiety should take.

For the present purposes, whether the numbers work or not, when it comes to psychotherapy, a therapist's philosophical grasp of the range of human possibilities will

most often prove to be the final word in his selection of an intervention strategy. This point should underline the importance of phenomenologically approaching the developmental process prior to applying more precise experimental procedures. As pointed out in the introduction, it is in this pre-theoretical medium where therapists from the different schools communicate so that their ideas about development and change make sense to each other. It is within this medium as well that the broader implications of the TPD would be best tested initially. For if the theory's therapeutic merit is to be grasped at all, it will be at the experiential level first, where an aspiring psychotherapist can connect with its representations of lived realities prior to endorsing it as a therapeutic guide.

3.0.3 Personality transformation: The experiential landscape

In investigating personality transformation, the aim was to elucidate the "structure", that is the "what" of the experience using the phenomenological method of inquiry. Acknowledging that there could be both a subjective and objective view of an individual's experience, the intention was to focus more on the subject's point of view in order to examine personality transformation from the perspective of the "experiencing individual".

That the results of the study provided empirical support for the TPD proved to be an unexpected bonus, for my acquaintanceship with the theory, at the time of this

undertaking, was relatively meager, and the investigation of personality transformation entertained no other motive than to uncover the structure of the phenomenon within the context of the "personal document." Realizing that the outcome of the investigation yielded a pattern of experiences compatible with Dabrowski's theory proved to be very satisfying and, in turn, inspired a number of the ideas being presented in this thesis.

Autobiographies as a data base

In the study, four autobiographies, written by individuals who had undergone a major personality shift, were selected as the data source. The value of autobiographies as a data base has been taken up by a number of authors.

> Analytical psychology is fundamentally a natural science, but it is subject far more than any other science to the personal bias of the observer. The psychologist must depend therefore in the highest degree upon historical and literary parallels if he wishes to exclude at least the crudest errors in judgment (Jung, 1965, p.200).

Dilthey, writing near the turn of this century, echoed similar sentiments when he made note of an essential shortcoming in the psychology of his time (tr. 1944). He pointed out that psychological science had nothing to say about the artist's creative imagination, about religious devotion, about sympathy and understanding, or about an

individual's sense of obligation and value. On points such as these, he felt that more had been learned from the great wealth of literature and personal documents in which keen observers had detailed many of their more significant life experiences.

Over the years, numerous complaints have been levelled against the value of personal documents for psychological research. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to fully engage in this debate and be fair to both sides of the issue. The reader is referred to arguments offered by Allport (1942) and Watson (1976) who have demonstrated that the great majority of these complaints do not prove to be fatal, and that most are issued from the perspective of the objectively minded scientist who evidences biases of his own.

The principal value of the autobiography for this research was emphasized by Krueger (1925) who claimed that the content of the personal history seemed to address the "personality making" situations of a given life and, I would also suggest, the "personality transforming" situations as well. While working through an autobiography, a researcher has the opportunity to observe a major portion of an individual's course of development. Apart from some attempts at long term growth studies, the life history seems to provide one of the few avenues into such a broad frame of reference, as well as access to the perspective of the experiencing individual which is of prime interest in

phenomenological research.

The autobiographies

As the goal was principally to uncover the "what" of personality transformation, the "how" was varied so as not to have the phenomenon itself confounded by the style in which it was experienced. For this reason, the four autobiographies chosen reflected the experience of 1) a psychotic - Clifford Beers (1908), 2) a neurotic - O.H. Mowrer (1966), 3) a religious conversion - Thomas Merton (1948), and 4) what I term "developmental crises" - Hermann Hesse (1971). By varying the style of transformation to be examined, it was felt that the phenomenon would remain as prime focus.

The research approach

Since the existential-phenomenological approach to research is not widely known, a few remarks seem in order at this point to provide the reader with some insight into the process. The researcher usually begins with a question that is to be answered by his subjects through written descriptions. The latter are then analyzed for what they reveal of the phenomenon under study. Since autobiographies, as situated descriptions of an individual's course of development, formed the data base, the following question was posed: "what is it about this autobiography that is revelatory of the phenomenon of personality transformation, and what are the lines of action leading up to and away from the experience?"

With the above question in hand, I proceeded to analyze each autobiography using a method synthesized from the approaches of A. Giorgi (1975), R. Von Eckartsberg (1978,a), and L. Watson (1976) in order to meet the specific needs of the study. A summary of the steps of analysis is presented in Appendix A.

Results

Presenting the results of the study in their original form would be far too lengthy for the present purposes. However, full elaboration of the current therapeutic philosophy does require a measure of comprehensiveness. For this reason a brief summary of each autobiography will be provided along with a discussion of the author's transformation experience. This will be followed by a presentation of the "general structure" of personality transformation as the phenomenon appeared to cut across the experiences of all four subjects.

Clifford Beers

Background. Beers wrote the final version of his autobiography at around age thirty. He had begun this project approximately one year after his discharge from a mental hospital. The time was the turn of this century, and the setting was gentle New England where fine manners, loyalty, and gentlemanly conduct were the rule of the day. This was quite a contrast to the harshness of his institutionalized life where abuse was the common denominator for himself and his fellow mental patients.

It was this abusive maltreatment of himself and others that inspired his career of reform. To launch this career, he wrote his autobiography to call attention to the injustices he had witnessed while incarcerated in a series of mental institutions. His dedication to this goal captured the hearts of many, including William James who proofread an early draft of Beers' life story.

Transformation. During his childhood, Beers appeared to have developed an inauthentic pattern of relating to the world by choosing to hide his true feelings and presenting a false front to those who surrounded him. This appeared to be the seed of what later developed into an inner division, a split between what he knew of himself and what he chose to reveal. This pattern of relating then became entrenched into a lifestyle that proved to be fertile ground for the breeding of tension. This tension began to erupt through Beers in a series of anxiety attacks. The latter were so frightening that he began to retreat from any situation that seemed to be even remotely threatening. This tendency to withdraw included increasing his distance from significant others. As this pattern of crisis-fear-retreat became more deeply entrenched, it soon evolved into a vicious cycle from which Beers could not extricate himself. Eventually, at his wits end he decided to try and destroy himself rather than endure any further suffering.

It was after his failed attempt at suicide and the realization that he had sinned against the moral fabric of

his society that a deep depression took hold. An important feature here was that Beers truly felt he was some kind of criminal and, as such, should be severely punished. By suffering through guilt and self-condemnation, Beers seemed to be punishing himself, even though he believed that others were responsible for his pain. This period of self-cleansing via suffering seemed to be a way of atoning for his failures, especially his crime of attempted suicide. Only when this period had run its course did he again begin to feel worthy of accepting the love his family had never stopped offering. It was love that proved to be the ultimate healer and it was love that paved the way for his eventual reconciliation with himself and his world of significant others.

It was through his self-reconciliation that he came to know the value of his experience and how it could perhaps be of help to others. This proved to be a crucial aspect of his transformation as a whole. Having regained himself and having become witness to a world of abuse and injustice, Beers felt a strong urge to share his experience in the hopes of reforming the mental health system. Eventually, his concern and commitment evolved into the establishment of the Mental Hygiene Movement, a body whose main function was to protect the rights of individuals confined to mental institutions.

Thomas Merton

Background. Merton wrote his autobiography inside a monastery which he had entered to pursue a vocation to the priesthood. The story covers his life from his earliest childhood recollections up to his entry into the clergy and begins shortly after World War One.

Because his mother died when he was quite young, Merton's early years involved tagging along with his father who made his living as an artist. Much of his youth was spent crisscrossing the Atlantic, living for a time with grandparents in America, in a boarding school in France, and then with an aunt in England.

During his student years in England, Merton spent a number of his summers travelling about Europe. He was always interested in art and he became quite entranced by some of the paintings and sculptures that adorned many European churches. It was on one of these excursions and after a rather moving experience in a cathedral that he first sensed a desire to become a priest. However, these early spiritual yearnings eventually faded and soon after he even developed an aversion towards religion altogether.

After dropping out of Cambridge University, Merton, somewhat embittered, returned to the United States. He had just lost his father and was suffering through the emotional trauma associated with a recently dissolved relationship. He decided to attend college in New York city, and, after a brief fling with Communism, he again began to look in the

direction of religion. After a number of cycles of being attracted to a religious life and slipping to his old ways of self-indulgence, Merton finally commited himself to becoming a Catholic and then the priesthood.

Transformation. Merton's personality transformation was a movement from a level of irresponsible self-indulgence, through pain, suffering and eventual self-forgiveness, to a world of responsibility, commitment and increased freedom. Although the origins of the experience are different for each autobiographer, a basic pattern, as seen here with Merton, appears to repeat itself rather consistently.

A perceived lack of love during his childhood and adolescent years seemed with Merton to have become translated into a yearning for affection. It is this desire for love that appeared to lead him towards his religious conversion and his vocation to the priesthood. While drawing him in this particular direction, this transcendental love seemed to have also taught him to love himself. In learning to accept and love himself, he managed to heal the split between what he wanted to be and what he was. This love then became expressed as an ultimate concern which he then put into practice by dedicating himself to his fellow man.

In Merton's experience of transformation the important function of anxiety attacks becomes evident. Born from accumulating tension in the void between conflicting agendas (to be happy and successful, yet refuse to work for it), Merton's attacks seemed to call attention to his lack of

integrity and challenge him to reevaluate his lifestyle. Sometimes referred to as "calls" from his conscience, these attacks drew immediate attention to the discrepancies in his behavior and, in so doing, served to suggest corrective measures as well. At first Merton found these attacks to be so frightening that he only wanted to retreat from life rather than move forward at all. Eventually, after a number of cycles of "call - commitment - sliding back - recall", Merton's continued sense of frustration prompted him to take a rather dramatic leap forward. As with Beers, Merton also underwent a period of cleansing through pain and suffering. In leaping towards faith in himself, he equally seemed to land on firmer psychological ground.

O.H. Mowrer

Background. Mowrer is a practicing clinical psychologist who wrote his autobiography to illustrate the complexity of the developmental process as he had experienced it. Written in the mid sixties, his life history has become part of a series of self-selection textbooks which introduce the student to a number of areas in "behavioral psychology".

Mowrer's life story also begins shortly after World War One. As a child growing up in rural America, he enjoyed endless freedom. This was due, in part, to his being the youngest in the family, but also because of an understanding between himself and his father. The deal was that if he continued going to school and did well, he would be excused

from the more mundane chores around home. This idea appealed to him immensely, and often Mowrer admittedly pressed his advantage to the limit in an effort to avoid all responsibility.

This blissful life, however, did not last forever. At age thirteen, Mowrer lost his father and was thrust to the forefront of responsibility, being the only child left at home. It was at this time that he began to have depersonalization experiences and anxiety attacks. Failing to get adequate professional help, Mowrer eventually decided he would have to study psychology in order to sort himself out.

Transformation. It is interesting to note that Mowrer's career as a psychologist was inspired by a deep unfulfilled need which lingered from childhood. After losing his father, then suffering a number of depersonalization experiences and anxiety attacks, he chose to study psychology in the hopes of succeeding where others, who had tried to help him, had failed. This was the beginning of Mowrer's search, a quest for answers of personal significance.

Another interesting feature, and one seen with Merton, is that Mowrer's movement towards higher levels of growth was also a cyclical process. In his case, this involved a number of repeating cycles of "anxiety attack - retreat from the world - attempts to get help (usually psychoanalysis) - a period of relative calm - building tension - and anxiety attack", which started the cycle over again. Throughout his

university years and early professional life, this cycle repeated itself at least five times. In frustration, Mowrer eventually abandonned psychoanalysis and sought his answers in a new direction altogether.

All through his neurosis Mowrer suffered from an inner division between what he revealed of himself and what he knew to be true. His greatest fear was to be exposed for what he believed he was - a despicable character. He chose not to deal with this dichotomy, however, because he could also continue to keep his personal interests primary and ignore the pain he sometimes inflicted on others. This discrepancy was a continuous source of tension for him and seemed to underlie many of his anxiety attacks. It was only after he had made a confession to his wife about some of his more surreptitious activities that the attacks did cease. But, as his subsequent experience revealed, confession to this significant other was only a first step towards inner healing. It seemed he had yet to atone for his failings in order to be more fully cleansed of past indiscretions. This was accomplished through an intense period of suffering where he eventually came to terms with the core of his deep seated guilt. It was only after this period of intense disintegration, which even required hospitalization, that Mowrer felt free enough to forgive and truly accept himself. Then, as with Beers and Merton, Mowrer moved to make use of his experience to help others in similar distress.

Mowrer's integrity therapy was simply an elaboration on key aspects of his transformation experience. The latter he would often refer to openly as an example of the value of confession, atonement and personal integrity for a return to mental health. These lessons he made available in both his "individual" and "group" therapeutic formats for the benefit of clients whose sufferings now seemed much like his own.

Hermann Hesse

Background. This particular autobiography was written as a series of fragments which refer to specific periods in Hesse's life. The most important of these is entitled *Life Briefly Told* and was written just after the period which encompassed his personality transformation. The other fragments tend to flesh out some of his more important developmental experiences, especially those involving his transformation.

Prior to World War One, Hesse had achieved some success as a poet and was living a rather comfortable life complete with home in the country, wife, children and garden. After a difficult struggle to assert his life direction during adolescence, Hesse was permitted to take charge of his own destiny, much to the dismay of relenting parents and teachers, and now believed that his battles with the world were over. World War One was the first in a series of events to shatter that illusion. This was soon followed by the death of his father, the severe illness of a son, and finally, the mental collapse of his wife. The crumbling of

his world prompted a critical self-examination. He now felt obliged to re-examine his values and beliefs in an effort to find some kind of meaning in what had become for him a living nightmare.

So shattered was he by the above events that Hesse eventually sought help via Jungian analysis. At one point, he even met Carl Jung. It was partly because of the latter's influence that Hesse felt he must begin anew the long hard climb towards his freedom. The suffering he endured through his personal reevaluation stretched through the war and extended over a number of years thereafter.

The outcome of Hesse's transformation was marked at first by a new wave of creativity of which his book *Demian* was a product. Hesse also began to realize that his writing had always been somewhat autobiographical. All the characters in his early works were really differing manifestations of himself.

Transformation. In Hesse's experience of transformation, one notices that not only embodied disturbances such as depersonalization experiences, anxiety attacks, or a psychotic breakdown could precipitate the event but so could external factors such as war, illness or death. For Hesse, the latter were sufficiently disturbing to call him to a personal reevaluation and attend to certain moral discrepancies in his lifestyle. Because of what he saw during his self-examination, he felt the need for some outside assistance which he obtained through therapy.

Although as dramatic in its onset as Beer's experience, Hesse's transformation proceeded rather slowly. A number of years elapsed before he felt strong enough to take to writing again.

The wave of creativity that prompted this return also revealed to Hesse a latent talent for drawing. This he began to explore with his renewing vigor. There was a similar creative upsurgence with Beers and Merton. Hesse not only returned to writing with passion, he also began to illustrate many of his works as well.

Hesse's reconciliation with himself and his world of significant others was also marked by a desire to help his fellow man in whatever way possible. Hesse felt his transformation had some kind of universal significance, and, as with Beers, Merton, and Mowrer, wanted to share his experience in the hopes of helping others. His concerns then became expressed in concrete action. He proceeded to set aside the income from his watercolour editions as a fund for financing the escape of fellow artists from his native Germany.

General structure of personality transformation

I will now present the general structure of personality transformation as the phenomenon appeared to cut across the experiences of the four authobiographers. This description aimed to focus on the essential themes, constituents and meanings that surrounded the experience in a universal sense. This descriptive statement was intended to present

what Merleau-Ponty (1962) has referred to as a phenomenon's "unique core".

Transformation can be conceived of as a journey through the living hell of oneself where one is called by crisis, such as in family death, illness, or anxiety attack to enter his world of feelings and meanings and face the potential chaos within. One may be called just once or several times, but a complete transformation does not occur until the inner chaos is fully acknowledged and accepted as one's own. This would include an acceptance of all crimes and failures, both personal and social, such as self-centered indulgence, inauthenticity, irresponsibility and deceit.

Then begins the cleansing, the descent into the hell of oneself, the desert experience, the journey through the narrow straits of one's existence as the latter shrinks in an apparently necessary retreat from the everyday world of tasks. One suffers from uncertainty, from upheaval, and disintegration when viewing one's personal chaos which often includes the guilt born from living a divided existence. The latter might involve a discrepancy between one's acknowledged morality and one's conduct.

In transformation, one has to acknowledge and suffer the pain of personal guilt as it seems to carve its way through deceit, cowardice and

irresponsibility. This is the time of atonement, of penance for one's crimes and failures. The failure to meet one's true potential is one example, as is the crime of attempted suicide. This is a time of attrition which continues until one is ready to accept oneself and be forgiven. Once feeling worthy of forgiveness, one prepares to make the leap, the leap to faith in oneself and the whole of existence.

Having successfully executed the leap, one now appears ready to accept oneself in spite of past failings, to forgive and be reconciled with the world of others. One may feel reborn, ready to begin life anew by making and carrying out new commitments. One feels ready to share again in love and kindness, to forgive and help others in need without judging. One discovers that a commitment to change and self-improvement can best be brought about by first changing oneself.

The sense of love one now experiences seems to be born from the cleansing fires of former guilt. It is a transcendent love that is first experienced as forgiveness, and then seems to reignite the life within. This love also opens one up to one's own best interests and most often becomes revealed in an ultimate concern.

On the heels of transformation, one enjoys a new found sense of freedom. This sense of inner

liberation seems to open one up to a new view of truth as a sense of quiet wisdom intimately tied to the transcendent nature of love. Stepping from personal experience with suffering and transformation, one may begin extending oneself to others in a spirit of humble brotherly giving. Offering one's experience for the benefit of others may be how one expresses one's ultimate concern. The latter may also include one's special commitment to life, to love, and to that "timeless realm of the spirit" where perhaps dwells life's more worthy values. This may also be a commitment to just listening to what is vital and alive in oneself, be it felt as conscience, intuition, or God. One may then realize that innocence and unity can be reclaimed if one gives up blaming the world for personal chaos, acknowledges guilt, and suffers pain as best one can. Once cleansed, one may then feel free to turn towards the future and open one's arms to renewed possibilities, to go forward and meet destiny without fear or anxiety.

Looking closely at this description of personality transformation, one may notice how the experiences of the four autobiographers have become linked together to provide this more general view. I will now take up some of the major themes that began to emerge rather consistently as the analysis proceeded, for each of these has important

implications for the therapeutic philosophy being evolved here.

Crisis. Whenever the course of our daily lives is disrupted by some form of upheaval, we are faced with a crisis. Crisis here by virtue of the fact that we have to return to ourselves and reevaluate the meanings we are living in view of the important meaning that now confronts us. In each case reviewed here, the transformation experience was precipitated by crisis. With Beers for example, his fear of death in relation to his brother's illness resulted in anxiety attacks and his eventual psychotic breakdown. With Merton and Mowrer, we saw that the loss of close loved ones left them tense and anxious, and their ensuing lifestyle became fertile ground for anxiety attacks.

The signal of crisis in the above cases manifested itself experientially, emerging out of each individual's embodiment. Events out in the world may also precipitate a crisis since all intense experiences appear to move through us at some level. With Hesse for example, crisis emerged in the form of four quick but powerful blows. The first was the war which seemed to challenge a number of his personal values, to be soon followed by the loss of his father, a son's severe illness, and his wife's mental collapse. With all four authors, crisis eventually inspired some action on their part out of the necessity to cope with what often developed into an intolerable situation. Crisis in this

sense served to initiate what later became revealed as their period of transformation, a period which usually began with some form of self-examination.

Self-examination. With all four authors the acknowledged necessity of a self-examination usually resulted in a confrontation with inner chaos, a facing up to the disorder in their lives. In entering their private world of meanings, each came face to face with certain crimes or failures in terms of their relationship with themselves and their world of others. The term "crime" here is not to be taken literally, but is employed to emphasize how strongly some of the autobiographers felt about their particular failings. It proves to be especially suitable with Beers who, in view of his attempted suicide, felt a strong need to label himself a criminal. This harsh judgment seemed to be part of a process of self-punishment and served to intensify his suffering. Although the other authors suffered as well during their time of atonement, only Beers closed off every possible avenue of warm human contact in view of his adjudged despicableness. In all four cases, however, the crime implied failure, a failure to meet their true potential and live up to standards of conduct acknowledged as morally appropriate. If one conceives of crisis as in part being *caught* with our failings, this in turn can easily be analogized to being *convicted* of a crime for which *punishment* as atonement has now become due.

Cleansing, confession and atonement. Cleansing in the case of personality transformation refers to atonement through suffering in response to the recognition of one's personal failures. Confession, as in therapeutic self-disclosure, serves to acknowledge to oneself and others the nature and severity of our actions, and comprises an important first step towards taking full responsibility for their impact. At this point in the four transformation experiences, each author seemed to yield to a strong need for self-punishment which was expressed initially as a form of depression. The ensuing suffering usually involved isolation from significant others, however, as it was generally through others that they had come to recognize their failings. During this period of personal cleansing each author paid his dues, that is he suffered until the demands of his personal atonement seemed to be satisfied.

Guilt was revealed to be a principal agent in the cleansing experience, making itself known experientially during an individual's transformation. With Beers, it was guilt for having shamed his family and peers. For Merton, it was a guilt born from the recognition of irresponsibility and self-indulgence at the expense of significant others. For Mowrer, it was guilt in face of his lack of integrity in both business dealings and interpersonal relationships. For Hesse, guilt had a more universal quality, that is a guilt he had to share with a world that could so easily slip into war and bring destruction upon itself. His guilt was also

linked to a recognized lack of compassion and irresponsibility towards the needs of his fellow man. Guilt's experiential dimension in all four cases was usually expressed in depression as a form of self-punishment.

Forgiveness and rebirth. After suffering through the drama of facing lost possibilities and personal failure, each author felt rewarded with a sense of forgiveness. This was as much a transcendent experience - feeling forgiven, as it was concrete - forgiving oneself. Having fully atoned for their various failings, each author felt able to set aside the past in favour of new possibilities which now appeared to open up in many areas.

Forgiveness here was also analogous to love, love of oneself as well as others. The sense of rebirth that followed was revealed as the high point of this love and was felt as inner healing. Here, whatever divisions had previously existed now seemed to dissolve and form a new unity which was experienced as " being returned to oneself". This critical shift from pain and suffering to forgiveness and love was marked by a leap. This was usually expressed as a leap to faith, faith in oneself, as well as a more generalized faith in the whole of existence.

Elation. After suffering through the pain of guilt, forgiveness brought with it such a sense of release that the ensuing exhuberant mood of an individual sometimes could not be contained, swelling in Beer's case to unprecedented proportions. However, despite the childlike idealism that

often followed, it is important to note that it was during this phase of the transformation process that specific lifetime commitments emerged for each author.

Reconciliation and renewal. Following forgiveness, rebirth and elation, a new desire emerged with each author, a strong need to renew contact with their world of significant others. Not only was this a need to be with others, but to serve them as well. Having suffered through the hell of their personal transformations, each autobiographer seemed to better appreciate the pain that others had to endure. Recognizing the inherent value of their own experiences, they began to realize that what they had learned could perhaps be of value to others. In this way each author came to settle upon an individualized ultimate concern and life commitment.

Authentic commitment. The term "authentic" is employed here to emphasize the ultimate value a commitment held for an individual as it related to both personal experience and the acknowledged needs of others around him. With each author, this commitment, as an ultimate concern and as love (heart's desire), was pursued with unremitting determination. For Beers this love grew into a career aimed at the reform of mental institutions; the latter's continued maltreatment of vulnerable individuals like himself never ceased to be a source of great personal pain. With Merton this love revealed itself as an acceptance and then pursuit of a vocation to the priesthood. Love was here demonstrated

in its ultimate transcendant quality, as the love of God. For Mowrer, love as ultimate concern resulted in the development of "integrity therapy", the latter being based on the very lessons of his transformation. Finally, for Hesse, love as an ultimate concern emerged in a new accomodation with his artistic talent and in a commitment towards the welfare of others. This included a reconciliation with his family and the provision of financial assistance to fellow artists struggling to escape oppression in his native Germany. No matter what the individual circumstances, each author's commitment was born in the fires of their personal transformation and bore the stamp of their particular life experiences.

To summarize, personality transformation, as revealed in the experiences of the four autobiographers, can be described as a movement from a very basic level of mental and emotional functioning where an individual's will and intelligence are primarily directed by goals of self-gratification with little concern for personal integrity, the demands of responsibility, or the needs and desires of others. This is a movement through a rather turbulent disintegrative process, being either short and intense, or, long and cyclical, where personal values and life goals come up for questioning. Here an individual is forced by some life crisis such as death, illness, or personal failure to turn inward in a self-examination and begin looking at what he stands for. In so doing, the

individual may become present to personal pain and suffering which can temporarily distort his contact with reality.

This self-examination is usually succeeded by a dramatic shift in life orientation as certain personal insights may prompt the individual to move towards a more productive and rewarding level of functioning. This new level is generally marked by such values as "concern for truth", "personal authenticity", and "empathy for others". This could include a commitment to helping those invididuals whose suffering may now be reminiscent of one's own. Transformation at this level is also revealed in an individual's acknowledgment of conscience or intuition as being part of a higher, more transcendent reality, a spiritual dimension which seems to invite the expression of higher values.

Following transformation, one notes that the affected individual tends to relinquish self-centeredness in favour of responsibility and learns to embrace the needs of others as if they were his own. These changes in outlook may prove for the most part to be irreversible. Although occasionally longing for the simplicity of his former life, the transformed individual generally realizes he could never return to that state; for once having been to the top of a mountain, one never really forgets the view, even when returning to live in the valley below.

Although appearing somewhat ideal, this conception of personality transformation is firmly rooted in the daily

experiences of four eminent individuals and represents for the present philosophy what is not so much necessary, but ultimately possible in terms of development and change. For those who are well acquainted with the TPD, it may also be apparent how the preceeding summary seems to capture the flavour of what Dabrowski means by "positive disintegration". Again, I wish to emphasize that these results were produced long before I had become well acquainted with his theory.

It would seem obvious that not everyone's destiny points towards the eminence achieved by the four individuals in this study. Given differing personal potentials for growth, one can surmise that this type of achievment is exceptional. However, one cannot help but notice that the experiences described by each author are shared by us in varying degrees. What I am suggesting is that since we are all somewhat acquainted with the range of human experience, many of us can probably recognize fragments of our own lives in those of the four authors. This is one of the reasons that the foregoing description of personality transformation coupled with the TPD serves as a philosophical guide for me in the therapeutic encounter. The conception of pain, suffering and confession (self-disclosure) as therapeutic necessities are particularly valuable since I am no longer inclined to assist clients in aborting these experiences. I have found rather that supporting the client through his time of trial tends to attenuate the debilitating effects of

anxiety or depression while bringing him in closer touch with himself. A dialogue with the TPD will now be taken up in a demonstration of the qualitative support these findings provide to Dabrowski's theory.

3.0.4 Personality transformation and the TPD

Dabrowski has claimed that mental and emotional growth proceed through a process of "positive disintegration." Viewing human functioning as being multilevel in nature he conceives of development as a cyclical process of disintegration and reintegration. Of the five stages in his theory, only the middle three reflect this experience of positive disintegration. Level 1, "primary or primitive integration", and level 5, "secondary integration", are considered to be conflict free. But to attain level 5 from level 1 involves a major leap forward, not unlike what has been described in the four experiences of transformation just reviewed.

For Dabrowski, this leap, or movement through the middle stages is not accomplished without considerable pain and suffering, even occasional psychic disorganization. Allport (1955) has described this process as "saltatory becoming", that is becoming via leaps. He also submits that the journey is often replete with difficulty where any forward movement in terms of growth usually invites the counterattack of anxiety. This was clearly evident in the experiences of the four subjects, as was their experience of

disintegration following the respective crisis points in their lives. A review of what Dabrowski means by "positive disintegration" may help illustrate this better.

Disintegration itself we are told: "consists of a loosening, disorganization, or dissolution of mental and emotional functions" (Dabrowski, 1972, p.293). This may include a temporary loosening of an individual's contact with his current reality due to depression, severe fatigue or boredom. But more importantly, as we saw with personality transformation, symptoms of disintegration may be seen at times of severe crisis, such as the loss of a loved one (Merton, Mowrer, & Hesse), illness (Beers & Hesse), or the recognition of personal failure (all four subjects). Positive, or developmental disintegration is most often precipitated by crises such as these. The latter generally bring conflicts which may not be experienced consciously, but rather tend to reveal themselves in moods, obsessive thinking, or general uneasiness, again reminiscent of the experiences of the four authors.

For Dabrowski, conflicts generally reveal themselves as ambivalences and ambitendencies in the earlier phases. As an illustration, both Merton and Mowrer tended to psychologically make gains and then lose ground in cyclical fashion during the early phases of their transformation experience. It is only in the middle and later phases of their experience did their respective crises and ensuing conflicts become transformative in nature.

This greater possibility exists, Dabrowski asserts, when an individual comes into contact with "developmental dynamisms". As we saw earlier, these are feelings which can arise either spontaneously or in response to a particular life crisis and are called dynamic because experiencing them may be transformative in nature. Examples from his theory are feelings of "shame and guilt", particularly regarding one's personal development, and feelings of "inferiority" or "dissatisfaction with oneself" for similar reasons. It was feelings such as these that prompted Merton and Mowrer to more decisively take up the reins of their development and again with Beers and Hesse, to move towards their own best interests and a commitment to helping others. We saw that crisis, however, more than anything else, initiated the process of their transformations, but there is also evidence in each autobiography which suggests that the dynamic feelings described above were equally bound up with the unfolding of the process, particularly in Mowrer's neurosis and Beer's psychosis.

According to Dabrowski, the full process of positive disintegration is marked by a dramatic change in life attitude. This new outlook is characterized by what he calls higher emotions, such as a "sense of autonomy", "authenticity", and "responsibility for others". At this level an individual may evidence a high degree of awareness, as well as high moral standards and aims. These characteristics are quite descriptive of Beers, Merton,

Mowrer, and Hesse who, after suffering through their personal disintegrations, transcended the divisions within themselves and became reintegrated at a higher, more productive, more personally authentic level of functioning. This becomes especially evident when one takes note of their various life commitments and how each of the latter involved the health and welfare of others.

In terms of Dabrowski's "overexcitabilities", one can easily situate the four authors as well. Hesse is revealed as imaginationally overexcitable, whereas Beers appears to be dominated by a combination of both the emotional and imaginational dimensions. Merton, for his part, seems to share with Beers a strong emotional character in his area of overexcitability but, proves to be visibly influenced by the intellectual as well. Similarly, Mowrer appears to be strongly influenced by the intellectual, however, to the exclusion of the other aspects. In addition, it would appear that Hesse, Beers and Merton, in the course of their development, had passed that point in level 3 of the TPD where Dabrowski claims there can be no sliding back to the more primitive levels. In fact all three clearly evidenced that contact with the higher emotions had been made and these, in turn, were being put into the service of their fellow man. Mowrer, on the other hand, although having reached level 3 as well, appears to be still vulnerable to sliding back. This becomes evident in his obsession with the value of confession as therapeutic self-disclosue to the

exclusion of the higher levels of atonement. Also, traces of egocentrism still appear in certain areas of his functioning which suggests that he had yet to fully transcend the dominating influence of his lower levels.

From what has been presented thus far, it would appear that the structure of "personality transformation" tends to support the experiential categories of the TPD. I would suggest that such a qualitative endorsement is possible because the TPD is not merely a series of scientific abstractions piled upon each other without concern for their experiential origins, but a framework of developmental experiences rooted in everyday lived realities. And this is what the practitioner requires, a theory that correlates well with an experiential data base that reflects the outward possibilities of the developmental process. What I wish to underline at this point is the ease with which the TPD seems to compare with a number of divergent perspectives on development and change. This was first made apparent with existential-phenomenological descriptions of Passion in the previous chapter, with the structure of "personality transformation" just now. It is the case again with another important dimension as we are about to see.

3.0.5 Repentence and rebirth

Despite its comprehensiveness the TPD, as presently conceived, does not overtly account for all the experiences contained in the general structure of "personality

transformation". Some of these experiences are alluded to but it requires some speculation on the reader's part to assume their presence. Dabrowski does address the issues of "repentance and rebirth" in a series of recorded interviews but apparently chose not to include them in the framework of the TPD.[5] I want to bring them up at this time for two reasons: first, the dimensions of "repentance and rebirth" hold important implications for therapeutic practice and hence the current philosophy and second, they provide an additional existential perspective which compares favourably with the TPD while implicating the latter with issues normally only addressed by religion.

In his book *On the Eternal In Man*, Max Scheler (1960) addresses the experiences of "repentance and rebirth" which he claims are essential to man's higher development. As already suggested, these experiences are in a sense alluded to in the TPD but are clearly implicated in the general structure of "personality transformation". Scheler tells us that "among the stirrings of conscience, repentence is the one whose characteristic is to judge, and to concern itself with our past lives" (p.35). We saw this quite clearly in personality transformation where each author engaged in a self-examination which was precipitated by crisis and then required he face up to personal guilt. This process was described as the "cleansing" through confession and atonement, all synonyms for repentance.

---

[5] Recorded, transcribed and edited by L. Mos and M. Rankel, University of Alberta. At present unpublished.

We see another side of repentence when Scheler submits: "thus repentence too has, together with, and even in consequence of, its negative, demolishing function, another which is positive, liberating and constructive" (p.36). One cannot help but notice how this statement captures the heart of what is suggested by "positive disintegration". Destruction of the old in favour of the new is what Dabrowski wants to emphasize in his unique view. The pain, the suffering, the psychic disorganization are the signals that a potentially positive destructuring process is unfolding. Acceptance ensures its expression which can then give way to the necessary restructuring at a higher, more personally meaningful level of development. Repentence in this sense, although being truly painful, has the attainment of freedom as an ultimate goal.

Repentence is also a form of self-healing Scheler adds, a freeing of the soul in which one regains lost powers. Recall that healing lies at the terminus of the rebirth experience in personality transformation. Healing came with the end of suffering and the experience of forgiveness, both as a transcendent and concrete reality. In Scheler's words: "Repentence rejuvenates by cleansing one of former evils, by rooting them out and thus taking the sting and power out of guilt" (p.41).

Repentence to be truly effective must not only be repentence of conduct, but eventually must grow into repentence of Being, for as Scheler points out:"The more it

grasps the root of guilt perceived, to pluck it out of the person, it restores the latter's freedom" (p.48). Although true for all four authors, this was especially evident in Beers' and Hesse's cases as the stage became set for their leap to faith. The dramatic character of Beers' transformation climaxed in his moment of rebirth where he literally felt "pardoned" and then returned to himself through the healing powers of forgiveness. For Hesse, a conflict of values with a world gone mad with war was relinquished in favour of personal healing. As Scheler puts it: "it (repentence) makes the transition from shame over a particular deed to that completeness of hearty contrition out of which an indwelling force of regeneration builds up a new heart and a new man" (p.48). Beer's experience is certainly captured here, as is that of each autobiographer, in their movement from crisis through suffering and into healing and rebirth. This repentence of conversion, Scheler adds, leads from good resolutions to a "transformation of outlook", that is a "positive rebirth" as evident in personality transformation or "a change in attitude" as emphasized by Dabrowski.

Scheler's description of our spiritual core becoming cleansed and then building itself anew speaks equally to the structure of "personality transformation" and the essence of positive disintegration theory. Although only inferred in the latter, reading the transcripts of Dabrowski's interviews leaves little doubt that "positive

disintegration" implies a positive rebirth through some form of repentence, forgiveness and psychic healing. This transcendence of our biological life cycle in reaching for the spiritual core of "being" is captured in the following as well:

> Repentence is felt to flow forth from the psychic centre of personality, and after abstraction of our tenement of clay would not only remain possible but be enabled to reach perfection, through our release from the straitjacket of fleshy instincts, which distract us from perception of our wickedness (Scheler, 1960, p.50).

The religious quality of Scheler's descriptions must be obvious at this point; they also seem to dwell comfortably within the climate of a psychological discussion such as this. The experiences of the four autobiographers also took a religious turn, particularly as they described some of the key aspects of their transformation. In reviewing the latter one becomes aware that, as with the tenets of the TPD, repentence and rebirth are potentials in an arena that not everyone chooses to enter. But the evidence seems clear, to reach the higher levels of development one must transcend the biological and environmental influences in his life in order to better take charge of his destiny. To this end, repentence and rebirth, through an experience of positive destructuring, appear as therapeutic necessities for higher level development. This is a stance which previously could

only be found in literature and religion, but must now find acceptance in therapeutic practice and is an idea that has been suggested by others (Becker, 1966).

3.0.6 Summary

At the outset of this chapter, it was suggested that most psychological problems should be interrogated phenomenologically prior to applying the more rigid experimental procedures of the natural scientific psychology. In the same vein, it was also pointed out that approaching something as broad as the TPD with the precise methods of classical science was analogous to exploring a continent with tweezers and magnifying glass.

The results of a phenomenological exploration into the province of "personality transformation", as experienced by four eminent individuals, were engaged in a dialogue with TPD and were demonstrated to be examples of a process that Dabrowski claims to have captured in theoretical form. At the same time, these phenomenologically derived research outcomes were being presented as the experiential ground for the therapeutic philosophy being evolved in this project. By demonstrating that the themes and meanings characterizing "personality transformation" were compatible with the framework of the TPD, these results provided an additional perspective from which to view the existential character of Dabrowski's theory.

Repentance and rebirth were then singled out as key aspects of personality transformation which were not clearly visible in the multilevel framework of the TPD. A discussion between Scheler's conception of these dimensions of experience and certain aspects of Dabrowski's theory suggests that repentance and rebirth are at least implied in the TPD's framework, especially as one begins to appreciate the compatibility of both views. Finally, the main themes of crisis, self-examination, confession, suffering, atonement, forgiveness, healing, love and commitment, all of which emerged as part of "personality transformation" along with repentance and rebirth, are suggested to be of central importance to the therapeutic philosophy being developed here. Their applicability to therapeutic practice will be demonstrated later when I present the phenomenological approach to psychotherapy this philosophy inspires.

4. The Myth of the Hero

4.0.1 Functions of a living myth

> I cannot employ the language of science to trace this process of growth in myself, for I cannot experience myself as a scientific problem (Jung, 1961, p.3).

In the above quote Carl Jung expresses the age old dilemma that has confounded human efforts to establish via scientific proof the concrete essence of our humaness. What we are to our inward vision, he goes on to say, can only be expressed through the medium of myth. Myth, in the final analysis, proves to be more individual and, therefore, expresses life more precisely than does science. Classical science works primarily with concepts of averages which are far too abstract to be fair to the great variety of subjective experience that may characterize an individual's life.

Recorded history reveals that throughout all cultures the myths of man have flourished. As Campbell (1973) points out, myth has served as the living inspiration for man's day to day quest for the meaning of his presence in the cosmic order of things.

All human forms of activity, which sooner or later become concretized into religions, philosophies, arts, social forms, scientific discoveries and technology have the magic ring of myth (Campbell, 1973). Myths are in effect the

spontaneous productions of the psyche, the crystallization point of many individual passions, the reflection of man's spiritual quest for values. Freud (1943) and Jung (1961) both have demonstrated that the logic of the tale, the hero's awesome journey, in short, all the deeds of myth, have survived into modern times.

An example that meets our current purposes is the role of psychotherapist. His function today may be analogized to that of Wise Old Man in mythological parlance whose words and support assist the hero client through the trials and tribulations of his or her personal adventure. In this sense, it is the therapist who appears at desperation's door and points to the magic sword that will slay the dragon of Angst, who advises where can be found the waiting bride or the castle bursting with treasure, and who applies the healing ointments to near fatal wounds. It is the therapist in the end who eventually dismisses the aspiring conqueror and bids him return to the world of normal life, once the great adventure has been won.

This strange image of the therapist as "assisting god" and the client as "aspiring hero" begins to make more sense when we consider the number of bizarre rituals that anthropologists have reported about primitive tribes and historians have recorded regarding great civilizations of the past. In fact, it becomes quite apparent that the purpose and necessary effect of the mythical tale was to assist individuals in their crossing of the many difficult

thresholds of life. The myth, as a tale of transformation, served as both guide and inspiration for the various rites of passage from which the involved individual would emerge as reborn. Even today, traditional rites of passage teach the individual to symbolically die to the past in order to be reborn to the future (e.g. Christ's experience).

Campbell points out that: "it has always been the prime function of mythology and rite to supply the symbols that carry the human spirit forward (1973, p.11). He further suggests that the high incidence of neuroticism in modern society may follow from the decline of spiritual aid as was once readily available in the cloak of myth. The schizophrenic and neurotic journeys can in effect be a search, a psychological return to a time gone by to reclaim the prize of lost love, trust, or potency now recognized as a psychological necessity.

The growth of materialism as modern man's soothing balm has kept many of us fixated on the images of childhood (egocentrism) leaving us ill prepared for the necessary passage into adulthood with its inherent responsibilities, difficulties and conflicts. When looking at any cross section of world myths, their primary recurring theme leaves little doubt that the fate of men and women throughout history has been to undergo a series of standard metamorphoses on their way to full adult maturity (Campbell, 1949). Because we no longer attend to myth, except as intellectual curiosities, these important lessons appear

lost. But, as will be shown in the pages ahead, myth still triumphs today, resurfacing in the oddest disguise to once again advise man of his inescapable fate here on earth.

There are, according to Campbell, principally four functions being served by a properly operating myth. The first of these can be characterized as a "mystical function" which aims at providing human beings with a sense of awe and gratitude vis a vis the mystical dimensions of the universe and of Being itself. Its second function is to offer an image of the world that parallels the knowledge of the time, as contained in the existing sciences, arts, and other realms of activity directly relevant to a given culture. Many modern religions, given these criteria, are two thousand years out of date. One may perhaps understand why so many individuals, including clergy, are abandoning traditional sects in the hopes of finding a more personally meaningful answer to the age old question: what is the meaning of my life?

The third function of a living myth is to validate, support, and oftentimes instill the norms of a given moral order, more specifically, the norms of the society in which the individual lives. This proved to be especially important in early times when socialization was discovered to be a boon for personal survival. The individual learned he could fare better in a group where cooperative effort assured him his daily survival requirements (Bronowski, 1972). And finally, the symbols of myth helped guide the individual in

health, strength and harmony of spirit, so that he could effectively navigate his way through the course of a useful life.

The most important function of a mythological symbol, Campbell (1973) claims, is to first awaken, and then provide guidance for the emerging energies, or passions of life. He further suggests that mythological symbols were designed to turn individuals on so to speak. As we saw earlier with passion, and again with Dabrowski's dynamisms, the mythological symbol is seen to be both energy-releasing in a spontaneous sense, and then directing of one's passions once the energy becomes known and is accepted. The symbol invites one to function in a certain way, enticing one by its very appeal into full participation in life, while guiding one in the service of his or her social group. A living mythological symbol is an affect-image according to J.W. Perry (quoted in Campbell, 1973), it hits one where it counts, in the heart and not just the brain.

4.0.2 The quest of the hero

The happy ending that is generally a characteristic of each myth is to be read, Campbell tells us: ..."not as a contradiction, but as a transcendence of the universal tragedy of man" (1973, p.28). The world out there remains as it was, but because of a shift in emphasis within the affected individual, it appears to have been transformed. Actually it is one's attitude or outlook that has undergone

the metamorphosis. The events and experiences described in myth are generally fantastic and, by normal standards, are quite unreal. However, what they represent are psychological victories, and not the physical triumphs that are often portrayed (e.g. Odysseus, Hercules, Prometheus).

Although appearing to be overground, the passage of the mythical hero is through his or her depths where formidable resistances are overcome and long lost powers are revived, all in the service of a world whose needs are now seen to include one's own. Once the deed has been accomplished, the hero no longer suffers at the hands of hopeless despair. With his inner chaos made visible and accepted as part of a personal time of testing, his life becomes penetrated with an all sustaining love and an awareness of his or her own unconquered powers. In Campbell's words:

> Something of the light that blazes invisible within the abysses of its normally opaque materiality breaks forth, with an increasing uproar. The dreadful mutilations are then seen as shadows, only, of an immanent, imperishable eternity; time yields to glory (1973, p.29).

One is perhaps reminded here of the experiences of Beers, Merton, Mowrer and Hesse. By virture of the above criteria, they too can in a sense be regarded as heroes. And again, is not the whole idea of "positive disintegration" becoming visible in the hero's experience?

In an earlier work, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Campbell (1949) accomplished what can be described as a phenomenological analysis of cross-cultural mythologies from which he generated a universal formula of the hero's inward journey. The pattern emerges with the three main components of *Separation*, *Initiation*, and *Return*. Campbell describes this pattern as the "nuclear unit" of the monomyth (1949, p.30).

The hero's story goes something like this. An individual ventures forth from the everyday world and encounters a region of supernatural wonder. Tremendous forces are there met and challenged with a decisive victory being won. The hero returns from his adventure with a sense of renewed vigor and with the spoils of victory which he then shares with his fellow man. This also seems to capture the flavour of the inward journeys undertaken by the four autobiographers. Beers' experience proves to be most notable when Campbell goes on to describe the schizophrenic breakdown as a mythical adventure:

> The usual pattern is, first off, a break or departure from the local social order and context; next, a long deep retreat inward and backward,. deep into the psyche; a chaotic series of encounters there, darkly terrifying experiences, and presently (if the victim is fortunate) encounters of a centering kind, fulfilling, harmonizing, giving new courage; and then finally, in such fortunate cases,

a return journey of rebirth to life (1973, p.208).

The schizophrenic's journey, as suggested above, is inward and backward where the afflicted individual attempts to recover something felt as missing in his life, such as love. Whatever is to be recovered is essential, as Beer's experience will attest, to restore the individual's vital balance so that he can get on with his life. This proves to be equally true for the neurotic, as Mowrer's experience bears out, for he too must return to some basic early turning point to recover something lost such as trust. What the hero doesn't realize until he undertakes the adventure is that what he seeks has always been with him, a gift which he gives to himself. Note, for example, how the rebirth experiences of Beers, Merton, Mowrer, and Hesse were concomitant with their "leap to faith" or "choosing themselves".

There is a message emerging here for those of us engaged in psychotherapy. It appears that we should be careful not to cut off an individual's inward journey but rather facilitate the process by recognizing the universality of such a quest. It is when we don't understand such processes that our therapeutic methods may intensify an individual's suffering. Campbell reports that, without benefit of our sophisticated educational systems, the Inuit shaman can readily recognize when such a process is underway. Because of this knowledge, he can support and guide an individual through his respective psychological

trials. Confronted with a similar challenge, the average Western therapist might be inclined to have the individual admitted to the nearest psychiatric facility with a diagnosis of abnormality and miss the experience that is taking place.

Campbell (1949) also bemoans the fact that modern man is ill equipped in terms of experienced guides to help him negotiate this rite of passage. The seekers of old were saved by their inherited symbolic aids which, up until recently, had been handed down through the ages, given to mankind as a boon by those who had travelled a similar path. Modern man it seems can no longer hear that inner call, nor has he benefit of the outer doctrine embodied in myth which could guide him in his time of trial. The valuable guides embodied in myth not only sprang from man's psyche but were shaped by centuries of experience reflecting the trials and tribulations of countless heroes.

I see a need to resurrect the hero myth at this time, for not only do I recognize in it some personal experience, but that of Beers, Merton, Mowrer and Hesse. The structure of personality transformation is here revealed as a phenomenological reflection of the hero's inward journey cast in language of twentieth century psychology. The myth appears to live on despite Western man's inability to see it directly. Such a recognition, I would suggest, could be to our advantage particularly during these times of anxiety and disintegration where traditional symbols and beliefs seem to

be crumbling before our eyes. The hero, as Campbell points out and as "personality transformation" also emphasizes, rightly believes that the truth and only the truth shall make him free.

The transformation experiences of Beers, Merton, Mowrer and Hesse, like the classical hero myth, have been offered to us autobiographically as a boon for mankind. What the hero myth and these four experiences both point out is that we novices do not have to risk the hero's adventure alone, for the heroes of all time and all cultures have travelled this road before us. Apparently, we need so little to accomplish the adventure. In the Minotaur myth, for example, the hero has to slay a beast which, for the safety of the populace, has been placed in the center of an elaborately constructed labyrinth. In order to find his way in and out again, the hero is given a thread by Ariadne, his goddess guide. In terms of therapy, a sensitive ear may for some individuals be that thread. Having the dynamics of their plight reflected back to them may be sufficient to direct them towards their own true center. The labyrinth where resides the minotaur is thoroughly known. We have only to follow the path previous adventurers have marked for us:

> ...and where we had thought to find an abomination, we shall find a god; where we had thought to slay another, we shall slay ourselves; where we had thought to travel outward, we shall come to the center of own existence; where we had thought to be

alone, we shall be with all the world (Campbell, 1949, p.15).

A contemporary example of the hero's fantastic journey could be found in Robert De Niro's portrayal of "The Deerhunter" in the movie of the same name. Here the hero's outward journey comes to life in a twentieth century setting. De Niro's *separation* from the world of the familiar took him from the quiet of middle America to the war ravaged rice paddies of Vietnam. The war and its psychological effects on himself and two close friends proved to be his purgatory or *initiation* as it were. His goddess was a girlfriend who never lost faith in him even when his own doubts were at their peak.

The movie opened with De Niro facing a mountain elk which he had been stalking and then felled with one shot. The movie closes with a similar scene. Only this time, with the beautiful animal well sighted and within easy range, De Niro uncocks his rifle and watches in awe as the creature glances in his direction and then dances off into the forest. His *return* from the hell of Vietnam is marked by a new found respect for all forms of life.

We see here with De Niro a separation from the world of the everyday, a facing up to chaos and death, penetration to some new source of power and a life-enhancing return to the world of others. No matter where it happens or what the sphere of involvement may be (e.g. religious, political, artistic) mankind's really creative acts are born by those

individuals whose power is derived from some symbolic dying to the world, who live through a period as a non-entity where great struggles are waged and won, and then are returned to us through a rebirth, stronger than ever before and renewed with great creative power. As Campbell points out, the mythical hero's universal adventure helps us to understand:

> ... not only the meaning of those images (the situations of each myth) of contemporary life, but also the singleness of the human spirit in its aspirations, powers, vicissitudes and wisdom (1949, p.36).

The dream, Jung (1961) has suggested, is the personalized myth, and myth, the depersonalized dream. Both myth and dreams, Campbell adds, are symbolic in the same general sense as the dynamisms of man's psyche. However, in the dream, the forms and images are tempered by the peculiarities of the dreamer. On the other hand, in myth, the problems presented and solutions that follow are directly valid for all mankind. They belong to that "timeless realm of the spirit" where the essential lessons of life are regenerated and presented in forms suitable to the culture and historical period. As demonstrated by Campbell (1973) and reemphasized by the experiences of Beers, Merton, Mowrer and Hesse their essential form remains timeless.

4.0.3 The TPD as a modern myth

Popular tales such as "The Deerhunter" portray the hero's journey as physical. Religious accounts describe the experience as a moral transfiguration which becomes evident in Thomas Merton's autobiographical account. Nevertheless, as Campbell points out, little variation is to be found in the essential morphology of the hero's journey (1949). This becomes especially apparent when one looks back over the history of mankind to examine certain specific periods and take stock of their influence on the evolution of the Human race. The hero is seen to continually appear on the scene in suitable guises that help him meet the changing needs of the race.

The TPD, as suggested earlier, has emerged to meet current human needs as these have become reflected in the prevailing Zeitgeist. Dabrowski himself can be characterized as a reincarnation of the legendary hero who brings boons to his fellow man in the form of a comprehensive theory of development and change. The TPD in this view becomes a psychological map of the hero's journey. Dabrowski's gift or boon is this map, a portrait of the hero's adventure in contemporary form. Growing out of nearly forty years of clinical observations the map reflects the journeys of countless individuals whose trials and tribulations contributed to the present form of the theory much like the adventures of thousands of heros are reflected in the hero myth.

Dabrowski's clinical analyses, in terms of the TPD, aim at situating a given client on this psychological map called "positive disintegration". Dabrowski wants to show his client, using the language of the TPD, where he has been and where developmentally speaking he may yet go. This diagnosis in effect warns of what creatures or difficulties lie ahead, what help can be expected along the way (e.g. therapist as facilitator guide or benevolent god), what rewards are potentially available and what responsibilities these may imply.

This cosmogonic cycle, which recurs with astonishing consistency in all the myths of the world, appears to be couched once again in the existential framework of the TPD. Reaching down into one's depths it turns out is not merely a labour of attainment but of reattainment, not merely a journey of discovery but one of rediscovery where lost powers are reclaimed as one's due (Campbell, 1949). These powers are revealed to have been within the hero's heart all the time. Dabrowski's "inner psychic milieu" turns out to be a slumbering giant who is awakened when the spontaneous dimension of the disintegrative process is first initiated by crisis. The hero is "the king's son" who has discovered his true identity and by so doing has reclaimed his proper power. He is "God's son", who has paid the full price in terms of personal suffering and can now appreciate exactly what that title means (Campbell, 1949, p.39). From this perspective, the hero emerges as the symbol of the divine

redemptive image which is presumed to lie quietly within each of us in anticipation of the moment of rendering to life.

The hero and his ultimate god, as both the seeker and the found, are to be understood as a unity, that is the inside and outside half of the mystery of the self. The god as therapist, within the paradigm of the TPD, becomes replaced by the dynamisms of "autopsychotherapy" and "self-education" where the client reclaims for himself a lost power and places it at the helm of his life. The power was there all the time it turns out. The therapist, as guide, serves as a mirror to the hero's inner life and, while providing both challenge and support, waits patiently for the client to take charge of his existence. And when the moment of triumph through self-forgiveness is secured, the hero client may relinquish impotency and lay claim to his true center.

> The effect of the successful adventure of the hero is the unlocking and release again of the flow of life into the body of the world (Campbell, 1949, p.40).

Beers, Merton, Mowrer and Hesse, through the vehicle of autobiography, emerge as poignant examples of the hero and his inward adventure. The TPD, upon close examination, becomes revealed as the psychological map which attempts to describe in more scientific terms the essentials of this adventure as a journey of personal discovery. What the hero

myth underlines for psychology are the inward and outward dimensions of this journey both of which must be grasped as the two sides of an inseparable "whole".

Mythologies are great poems, and when recognized as such, point to the universality of human experience, the essence of personality transformation and the core of many religions. Their primary function is to cleanse the doors of perception and open us up to inner riches, to have us gaze in awe and wonder at the miracle of ourselves and the entire universe. As pointed out earlier, mythologies spring from the psyche and then point back to this source, guiding succeeding generations of individuals back to the center of themselves. Anyone who seriously wants to turn inward can use the hero's adventure to illuminate his depths by discovering the myth's references within himself. As to the TPD, these references are the structural components of the theory, the dynamisms and their implied experiences, all of which mark the path called "positive disintegration". In this sense Dabrowski, through the medium of the TPD, invites us all to be heroes, to participate in life's glory by coming to terms with our deepest selves.

4.0.4 Summary

Older theories are usually displaced by newer models which supercede these in terms of comprehensiveness and accuracy as determined by current human needs. But when a modern theory appears as the reincarnation of an age old

myth, then its inherent truth seems to transcend time. Such a bold claim may fall on the deaf ears of the prevailing scientific community, especially when it is demonstrated that many so called modern theories are old ideas cloaked in the latest scientific terminology (e.g., Freud, 1936; Jung, 1961).

Myths have been demonstrated to be trans-cultural as well as trans-historical (Campbell, 1949, 1973; Jung, 1961). Like good poetry, which they often are, myths that stand the test of time enjoy a certain face validity (Allport, 1955). That a particular myth continues to reemerge over the history of mankind must be taken as a clear indication that its message points to something universal and timeless about the human condition. Such is the hero myth, as evidenced in the structure of "personality transformation" and again, in the framework of the TPD.

The spontaneous offerings of schizophrenic patients whose tales consistently reflect the struggles of mythical heroes have as much to say about the psychology of their plight as to how treatment could best proceed. In other words, that the myths of mankind emerge in the ramblings of such troubled individuals suggests their origins were as much a product of creative as well as disturbed forces. What one must grasp is the message, and not dismiss their stories as merely the productions of some diseased mind. The TPD does not dismiss such individuals, in fact the theory emphasizes the importance and value of their journey, an

adventure not to be aborted but to some extent supported and guided.

This is Laing's position as well (1966). The hero myth, as a product of individual psyches across generations and cultures points in the same direction. Myths were the theories of our ancestors, providing the guidelines for effective living in a number of situations, capturing the human condition in poetry and song while providing a frame of reference against which to measure one's life experience. Today we claim to be scientific, but are our theories any more efficient than the age old myth? Have not our computers and statistical paradigms deluded us somewhat into believing we have surer access to the truth? And when a theory such as the TPD is demonstrated to be a close cousin of the age old hero myth, have we not rediscovered a certain wisdom of the ages?

SUMMARY OF PART I.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 have dealt with areas of specific interest to the evolution of the current therapeutic philosophy. The latter may now be seen to include the basic framework of the TPD, experientially supported by the structure of "personality transformation" and the classical "Myth of the Hero".

The position being explicated here endorses the philosophy of emergence shared by both the TPD and existential-phenomenology and accepts that higher development proceeds via qualitative leaps, the most important of which is a "leap to faith" in oneself. The key to this process can be characterized as an attitudinal shift from mere reacting to inner experience to choosing one's responses in light of that experience. An individual learns to heroically transcend his deterministic forces in order to attend to an inner dimension of being with an ultimate goal of attaining higher and higher levels of self-determination. The emerging individual begins cultivating what Dabrowski has labelled the "third factor" and what the existentialists refer to as "concious autonomous choosing".

Since the primitively integrated individual also chooses, an important distinction needs to be made. The developmentally oriented individual, through rigorous self-examination, discovers that he need not surrender completely to biological and environmental influences, but

may cultivate personal autonomy by risking him or herself through choice. This is choosing in a hierarchical sense where important values are always at stake. The biological and environmental factors in one's life can then be viewed as the necessary framework within which every human being has the potential to turn artist and create a unique unrepeatable human personality. The primitive, however, sees the framework as his entire life rather than merely as a set of boundaries. He is most often inclined to surrender his existence to the pressures of self-preservation while striving for power and material gain. Against the background of our biological and environmental influences, all hierarchical choices appear as reflections of the ultimate choice - "choosing oneself".

The present position accepts that individuals are not created equal in terms of developmental potential. Equality is seen to exist rather in each individual's responsibility to maximize his or her talents and abilities. Choosing oneself emerges again as the singular act of faith that will ensure full expression of these abilities. It matters not how far one travels in his personal quest, what does seem to matter is whether or not life's challenge is accepted and taken up to the limit of one's capabilities and whether or not this process includes the welfare of one's fellow man.

The present position also accepts that man's natural orientation points in the direction of his higher development, a journey often fraught with pain, suffering

and even despair, the latter being seen as necessary to higher level development. That this is so becomes clearly evident in the theoretical framework of the TPD, the experiential structure of "personality transformation" and the trans-historical and trans-cultural experiences contained in the "hero myth".

PART II

Towards the Evolution of a Therapeutic Approach

This portion of the thesis aims to bring forth the therapeutic approach which relies on the guiding philosophy evolved in Part I. Chapter 5 on "pathology" and chapter 6 on "psychotherapy" will deal with issues that are of direct relevance to this approach while further enhancing certain aspects of the TPD. These discussions will then set the stage for chapter 7 in which this author's existential-phenomenological approach to psychotherapy is to be presented.

5. Pathology

5.0.1 Introductory notes

Phenomenologically oriented therapists and researchers merely want to make clear what is taken for granted in our everyday experience of one another. The therapist for his part is always seeking better ways to understand his clients and in this effort intuitively utilizes a phenomenological approach to grasp their experience (Keen, 1978; Yalom, 1980).

Therapists would generally agree that explanations of a causal nature also contribute to understanding, but these only provide half of a picture which remains incomplete until one enters into the world of the other and, as best one can, begins to grasp his or her perspective.

Explanatory systems such as the DSM III (APA, 1978) are inevitable even though we accept that individuals are unique. What seems important is that one remain aware of their limitations. An individual's experience is always more than what the system can account for, more than the descriptive categories provided by a theory such as the TPD, and certainly more than what the client may have in common with other individuals.

In the area of psychopathology the objective stance traditionally taken on an individual's presenting problems carries a number of subtle implications. As Keen (1978) points out: "to understand an individual in terms of his

malfunctions is to make him into a thing, and it is to fail to respect him as a person" (p.235). The message here is that when viewing an individual as a person we can accept that he has "a response" to his situation, that he adopts a posture or style designed to cope with a given life problem; whereas when viewed as an object, the individual appears more as a victim of outside forces with the implication being that he may not possess the resources necessary to deal with his problems.

To illustrate, when we place people in care, that is when we institutionalize them, we often take away much of their ability to respond. Realizing of course that a certain lack of "response-ability" on their part has thrust them into our care, an objective stance towards such individuals directs us to remove more of this response-ability through the application of behavior management schemes, drugs, desensitization techniques, electroshock and lobotomies. We make judgments about their behavior which can have severe consequences especially when not tempered with understanding.

When we are introduced to the inside half of an individual's experience we gain new insights into his needs, insights which are generally not available to the external observer. Drugs and other management techniques only deal with the biological and environmental factors in their lives. Conscious autonomous choosing and self-determination are left unattended and are even discouraged in a system

oriented to the visible and the concrete. I do not want to belittle the many contributions gained from rigorous objective theorizing but merely wish to point out that to neglect the experience of the individual is to overlook a most important dimension in his or her psychopathology.

In this chapter I want to raise a number of issues that were touched on in Part I of the thesis and have a direct bearing on the phenomenological approach to psychotherapy to be presented later. The ensuing dialogue will attempt to contextualize some of Dabrowski's views on pathology with those of individuals representing the existential-phenomenological perspective. More specifically, we will be examining anxiety related issues and what they suggest for an approach to psychotherapy. In this sense, the therapeutic philosophy presented earlier is to be enhanced by this more in depth probing of certain experiences which are also related to "personality transformation". Throughout these discussions some speculations on the experience of the neurotic will be offered as these have come to light in my clinical work.

5.0.2 Anxiety

Psychologists and psychiatrists generally agree that anxiety is a central problem in psychotherapy. They also seem to concur on what that experience feels like for the anxious individual. But when it comes to the nature of the phenomenon - what is it?, why is it? - the agreement ends.

Each major approach, be it psychoanalytic, humanistic, behavioristic or existential entertains its own conceptions of the "what" and the "why" of anxiety, a comception that is directly reflective of their underlying assumptions on the nature of man.

Given that their conceptions of man vary, it should come as no surprise that their definitions of anxiety vary as well. For example, anxiety may be viewed as the outcome of repressed instincts such as sex and aggression, or, affective states such as guilt and shame (Freud, 1936), the byproduct of unsatisfactory interpersonal contact (Sullivan, 1949; Horney, 1945), the frustration of a self-actualization tendency (Rogers, 1951, Maslow, 1968), a learned drive (Mowrer, 1939; Eysenck, 1952), the natural concomitant of freedom and possibility (Kierkegaard, tr. 1944), the despair resulting from a lack of meaning in one's existence (Frankl, 1966), or the repressed awareness of one's finitude (Becker, 1973; Yalom, 1980). Whatever its source or its function, the nature of anxiety, as Fischer (1970) suggests, seems to be a direct reflection of a particular theorist's experience be it clinical or personal. What is interesting to note is that the various theories on anxiety are born from phenomena emerging out of the same field of experience, that of the other being-anxious.

K. Dabrowski. For Dabrowski (1967), the psychological stress of anxiety may arise from a growing sense of dissatisfaction with regard to ones's conduct, feelings of

inferiority in relation to others and an awareness of infidelity towards one's personality ideal. Dabrowski's view has greater implications than stances which restrict the experience of anxiety to our instinctual life and environmental influences primarily (e.g., Freud, 1936; Sullivan, 1949). His conceptions of anxiety take us into the existential realm of being, a realm where "choosing oneself" in spite of biological and environmental influences becomes the ultimate issue. Anxiety here is bound up with guilt as already pointed out in chapter two.

Dabrowski's "theory of positive disintegration" represents a fulfillment model in the shaping of personality, self-perfection being the ultimate goal. An individual encounters various thresholds in the on-going process of development where he may find himself violating his own highest standards (conscience) or that of the reference group to which he belongs. Positive disintegration takes place as the individual works through these transition points where incongruencies tend to emerge. The process is described as positive because its ultimate outcome is a movement towards the personality ideal. The anxiety encountered along the way is considered to be an unavoidable necessity to positive human development. In this sense, Dabrowski sounds much like Kierkegaard who, as we shall soon see, views anxiety as a necessary concomitant of growth, freedom and the possibility for individuation.

Anxiety for Dabrowski finds its source in a process which involves disintegration of certain values in favour of a new hierarchy more in tune with one's emerging interests. This type of anxiety is considered normal. It only becomes pathological when it accumulates in such quantities as to preclude successful negotiation of key thresholds found at each developmental level and prevents reintegration at the next higher level of functioning. As to its function, anxiety signals the onset of the period of disintegration, announcing as it were the dissolution of the current character formation in favour of what is as yet unknown. Debilitating anxiety is thus seen as that which becomes part of any neurotic pattern which is called up when the process of disintegration commences. Such anxiety can be so intense as to thwart successful movement toward the next higher level of integration.

Soren Kierkegaard. The main idea in Kierkegaard's *The Concept of Dread* (tr. 1941) is the relationship between anxiety and freedom. Freedom, as the ultimate goal of personality development, is always accompanied by anxiety. Also, freedom is possibility. Thus for Kierkegaard, anxiety is the possibility of freedom.

This he would describe as a state of normal anxiety where one is confronted by possibilities that have never before been encountered. To Kierkegaard, the more possibility (or creativity) an individual has, the more potential anxiety he has at the same time. Here he is

pointing to the idea of differing developmental potentials which Dabrowski has elaborated on in the TPD. Kierkegaard is clearly distinguishing this healthy form of anxiety from that which is constrictive or "sick". The latter forms of anxiety he says prevent an individual from moving forward in situations of normal anxiety, again anticipating the similar insights of Dabrowski.

Personality development or individuation (becoming a self) is gained at the price of confronting the anxiety inherent in attempting to differentiate oneself from one's environmental influences. Moving towards individuation would include increased self-awareness, knowledge of good and evil and awareness of responsibility much as we saw with Beers, Merton, Mowrer and Hesse. Blockages of self-awareness occur when an individual finds himself unable to move through accumulations of anxiety at various points in his or her growth. Therefore, anxiety for Kierkegaard is normal when accepted as a necessary consequence of moving towards freedom and individuation, and is pathological when it impedes one's growth.

Martin Heidegger. Heidegger (1963), while expanding on some of Kierkegaard's ideas, made some important contributions to our present day understanding of anxiety particularly with his emphasis on lived experience. What he felt was most important was that only from the perspective of the person living a particular affect, such as anxiety, could that affect be understood. He maintained that if one

adamantly remains rooted in the perspective of observer, then anxiety becomes indistinguishable from fear.

Heidegger insisted that human beings are related not only to particular objects or events but they are continually related to the whole, that is the world as a totality. This world in which anxiety and fear occur is not merely the physical world but includes everyday involvements, interactions, and meaningful human relationships. He understood that an individual's identity, being bound up with many lived realities, was always potentially open to threat and therefore anxiety.

Normal anxiety and neurotic anxiety

Anxiety per se, is not neurotic or normal but is so in its proportions. Normal anxiety is like any anxiety, a reaction to threats to one's being and to values which are essential to one's existence as a personality (May, 1950). However, normal anxiety is not disproportionate to the perceived threat nor does it involve repression or other mechanisms of defense. Conversely, neurotic anxiety is a reaction which is disproportionate to the perceived threat, involves repression as a strategy and is handled by means of an elaborately conceived defensive structure. Simply put, neurotic anxiety arises when an individual has been unable to confront and overcome the experiences of normal anxiety. Neurotic anxiety, instead of helping one be on guard against actual dangers, becomes crippling of one's own forces, and in its acutest forms, may render an individual relatively

impotent. This is what happened to Clifford Beers prior to his attempted suicide and ensuing psychotic episode.

Death anxiety

Some would suggest that all anxiety finds its roots in the repressed awareness of our death. Paul Tillich (1952) for example describes anxiety as man's reaction to the threat of non-being. That is anxiety arises as an individual becomes aware of being as over and against the ever present possibility of non-being. Irvin Yalom (1980) submits that the dynamics of schizophrenia and neurosis may be more fully understood when one begins to probe a client's perspective on the inevitability of his or her death. Our greatest difficulty as human beings, he goes on to suggest, lies in facing up to our finitude. Though developmental experiences may be different, the existential reality of our death makes brothers and sisters of us all.

Zilboorg (1943) has pointed out that the fear of death is actually an expression of the self-preservation instinct. The latter, serving as a basic drive in the maintenance of life, prompts us to master its dangers. With this in mind, Dabrowski's appeal to transcend one's biological life, in which the instinct of self-preservation is primary, is an invitation to confront one's death, face up to this imminent fate and move beyond it into the realm of true freedom. That this effort is desirable is summed up in the following quote which is again reminiscent of Dabrowski's position:

Such constant expenditure of psychological energy on

> the business of preserving life would be impossible if the fear of death were not as constant. The very term "self-preservation" implies an effort against some force of disintegration; the affective aspect of this is fear, fear of death (Zilboorg, 1943, p.467).

We fear disintegration, yet, according to Dabrowski, it proves to be an integral part of our higher development. The neurotic's anxiety, emerging during periods of psychic disintegration, can be viewed as a first stage alarm to disintegration's ultimate form - death.

Anxiety attacks

According to Becker (1973), the fear of death must lie behind all of our normal functioning in order for us to become armed towards self-preservation. This fear, however, must be placed out of awareness for few of us could function normally if it were constantly present. As Zilboorg suggests, repressing this fear must involve more than just setting it aside, but has to include some form of psychological pressure, a constant inner vigil which helps keep this basic reality out of awareness.

It is in the anxiety attack among other instances where awareness of one's finitude is confronted. Accumulating tension may explode to the fore precipitated by some life crisis which raises inner pressure beyond one's conscious ability to contain it. This is what happened to Merton and Mowrer. In their experiences of anxiety attacks each came

face to face with the possibility of dying, that is they came to know death as an affective as well as intellectual reality.

Literature on anxiety attacks issued from the perspective of the observer offer little support to the claim that a prime feature of the experience is the full affective awareness of one's personal death. Freud (1936) for example, remaining true to his original position on organismic energy distribution, offered the following description:

> Panic or anxiety state evidences no apparent connection between the reaction itself and the danger dreaded. It either accompanies symptoms or manifests itself whether as an attack or as a condition that persists for some time. In any case, there is never any visible justification, in the sense of an external danger that an observer may note. Acting out frequently appears with the panic reactions and is said to be an example of discharge behavior (p.168).

For Freud, the anxiety attack was the experiential aspect of a breakdown in the energy distributing system of a given individual. He did not go on to elaborate on the inner experience of the affected individual, nor did he offer any further insights into the function of anxiety other than maintenance of a homeostatic balance in the energy system. Rudolf Brun (1951) advanced a similar but more detailed

account of the experience which provides us with the full impact of the objective view:

> It usually comes on suddenly, like a lightning stroke from a clear sky, or like a storm, and it is combined with an extraordinary violent excitation of the whole sympathico-adrenal apparatus. In the foreground there are usually cardiovascular symptoms and disorders of respiration... The fit of anxiety develops like an avalanche; that is by operation of a vicious circle, the anxiety goes on increasing. The vicious circle comes into operation because on the one hand, the anxiety further stimulates the adrenal medulla, causing a further outpouring of adrenalin into the blood; on the other hand it is called into being by the cooperation of the psyche, inasmuch as the sympathetic centers of the diencephalon are intensively stimulated from the cortex so that the sympathetic reflex is still further enhanced. Then, at last, almost as suddenly, the antagonistic parasympathetic reflex intervenes and puts an end to the attack (p.148).

This description appears to be quite comprehensive, but close examination demonstrates that one is still uninformed about the lived realities that underlie this traumatic event. For this perspective, I offer the following excerpt from a description of an anxious phase of life in which the subject presents his experience of an anxiety attack which

erupted during his sleep:

> All of a sudden I woke up in a start. Something was wrong. Something was terribly wrong here. My heart was pounding like a bass drum, my pulse was racing, my mouth was dry, I couldn't breathe properly. My body had begun to tremble and then to shake violently. I began to feel really panicky. What was going on here? My mind began spinning as my body continued to shake. I thought I was going crazy. I was sure I was going to die. So many thoughts in my mind, it's going to explode. I couldn't stop moving. It was like an earthquake. Everything convulsed about me. Nothing made sense, I was terrified. I kept rubbing my hands down my legs, looking about me frantically, trying to get hold of something real. I was gasping for air, trying to think straight, trying to stop trembling. I tried to concentrate, to slow my mind down. I tried reassuring myself that I wasn't dying, that I wasn't falling apart. I tried focussing on my breathing, trying to control it. Eventually my mind did start to slow down. The controlled breathing began to take effect on my heart and pulse. I was coming back together. I knew I was out of danger now. I was still trembling but no longer were my thoughts racing. The whole incident couldn't have lasted more than three minutes, yet it had felt like an eternity. What was

most frightening was that I didn't know what was going on (in Szekely, 1980, p.125).

Here we have a most appropriate corollary to Brun's comprehensive but objective perspective. Both descriptions would seem to mesh easily providing the inside and outside halves of the anxiety attack experience. In fact many of Freud's observations can be recognized here as well. We also have to notice the references to dying which are only visible from this lived perspective. That this is more the rule than the exception has been documented elsewhere (Maslow and Mittleman, 1951; Portnoy, 1967).

As one can also see in this description, anxiety attacks refer to instances where an individual is suddenly thrown into a state of intense fear which lasts but a few minutes and then subsides. One immediately recognizes that such an experience is extremely disquieting. Although each individual would have his own characteristic way of responding during an attack, the most typical picture as seen here is that of subjectively experienced uneasiness, extreme apprehension and anticipation of mortal danger. This generally includes feelings of doom and disintegration, the source of which remains unknown and towards which the individual feels helpless (Maslow and Mittleman, 1951).

Normally, as Becker (1973) points out, we are able to live with the paradox of an ever-present fear of death cast in the mold of a self-preservation instinct along with an apparent total disregard of this objective reality in our

conscious life. Intellectually, we all know we are going to die, but this rarely becomes a lived reality until one physically faces the possibility of annihilation, loses a significant other, or, has an anxiety attack. Apparently, there is nothing like shocks in the real world to help jar loose our repressions.

5.0.3 The dialogue continues

For the existential-phenomenologists, the psychoneuroses are born of an inability or unwillingness to deal with anxiety. Anxiety, as we have just seen, emerges when we are obliged to make choices, particularly those which must be made in view of limited facts. Oftentimes, part of the process of choosing involves affirming a value. If the value or principle seems beyond question and is also widely accepted then choosing proves to be relatively easy. But, in the face of no objective evidence, choosing elicits anxiety. Here an individual is forced to confront issues in the absence of external guides and, therefore, obligated to create internal ones. If one has developed a sound sense of self-as-subject, choices will be made despite the anxiety. But, if one's project has been directed towards appeasing a perceived antagonistic environment, then choosing can prove to be a monumental task (Keen, 1970).

Choosing in the absence of external guides makes the individual solely responsible for his behavior. Emerging values become his or her creations. As Keen (1970) points

out, the individual creates moral standards, he does not merely discover them. Much like in the TPD, affirming values reflects a positive orientation in development. Dabrowski also believes that through this process an individual becomes authentic. It is therefore in choosing amid life's ambiguity that one enjoys the most salient experience of self-as-subject. Again, such a birth of oneself as an agent must take place amid the anxiety of not knowing whether one is choosing correctly. But to establish what is right, one must survive anxiety. Therefore authentic being, grounded in a sound sense of self-as-subject, must spring from anxiety.

Keen points out that an individual may cultivate an idealized self in attempting to ward off pathological guilt and anxiety. This strategy is generally aimed at compensating for feelings of inadequacy and powerlessness. By investing himself in such artificial rewards, the individual avoids the anxiety that generally underlies any realistic self-assessment. However, this "cure" must continously be supported artificially and is seldom a better choice than dealing with the distress. Since one's idealized self can never be grounded in reality, it remains vulnerable to any challenge and hence anxiety. Confronted with more realistic assessments in the world of others, one's self-image will remain prone to disintegration unless stronger defense strategies can be enlisted. Withdrawal from the world of others appears to be a rather familiar strategy, and is particularly common among neurotics and

psychotics. An idealized self-image is simply a lie, and lies always imply risk of discovery.

The idealized self being discussed here must not be confused with Dabrowski's personality ideal. The latter only emerges after arduous self-confrontation and realistic assessment of one's potentialities and values. An idealized self is a poor substitute and a choice forced by a sense of limitation in the face of life's many possibilities. In this sense the TPD lies in agreement with the existential-phenomenological view that one's ability to choose freely indicates positively oriented development. One exception is that freedom, being bound up with conscious autonomous choosing and the realization of higher level values, is won in the TPD rather than given as in the existential view.

The sense of powerlessness an individual may experience through his inability to sense himself as an agent may prompt him to regress to a lower level of development by escaping into the experience of self-as-object. This is the type of adjustment a neurotic generally makes. It is an attempt at recentering which actually places one off the mark. As a strategy, it is much like paying blackmail. Keeping anxiety at bay can only be accomplished by sacrificing one's own best interests. Anxiety, which is an inherent part of daily life, can only be avoided through the abandonment of one's commitment to his own best future.

The above strategy may also leave one open to the possibility of an even greater disaster. Having invested one's concept of being in an idealized self-image leaves one open to the invasion of a more devastating form of anxiety, namely that which accompanies one's loss of center. Since part of the neurotic's project has been to evade anxiety, his or her ability to deal with it in any form is handicapped. Any challenge to the idealized self is a challenge to one's entire being which is now off-center. Another way to describe off-center is off-balance. Anyone who is off-balance can easily be toppled over. Maintaining one's idealized image can become a full time concern requiring a large investment of energy, energy that becomes unavailable for healthier enterprises. Since one's sense of mastery is falsely grounded and off-balance, one's idealized self-image will tend to collapse in the face of truth emerging out of confrontations in the world of others. One's sense of impotence may immediately return, stronger and more debilitating than ever before. At this point, a new round of defensive strategizing may be initiated in order to re-erect the idealized self-image, or one may now take that first step towards his or her own best future by seeking help in the form of psychotherapy.

5.0.4 Summary

In the foregoing, a number of views on anxiety were presented in an effort to make explicit some of the issues

to be confronted in the therapy encounter. It was pointed out along the way that a purely objective stance towards pathology in general could not entirely satisfy the needs of therapists who also require the inside view of a particular distress in order make appropriate interventions. Various objective characterizations of anxiety and anxiety attacks were presented and where necessary were complimented with the perspective of the experiencing individual.

The discussion also focussed on the distinction between normal and neurotic anxiety, death as an ultimate source of anxiety and the anxiety attack. For the psychotherapist, a thorough understanding of these dimensions appears to be essential for it has to be appreciated that anxiety can be both facilitating of personal growth as well as debilitating. This possibility becomes more apparent when objective and subjective views of the experience are brought together and reveal a perspective that is shared in many respects by both existential-phenomenology and the TPD.

All of the above points are equally of concern to the current therapeutic philosophy and will be seen to reemerge as an integral part of the phenomenological approach to psychotherapy being presented in chapter 7.

6. Existential Therapy and the TPD

6.0.1 Overview

The present chapter is concerned with the final psychological dimension that will further enhance the therapeutic philosophy presented in Part I of the thesis, serve as a vehicle for the on-going dialogue between the TPD and Existential-Phenomenology and finish setting the stage for presentation of the phenomenological approach to psychotherapy. The discussions on development, research, myth and pathology that have preceded this chapter all merge here with the subject of psychotherapy. Therapeutic practice, a discipline in its own right, distinguishes itself as unique in psychology in that all of the above dimensions come to bear.

In the following pages, a number of therapeutic dimensions characterizing the existential approach will be introduced to prepare the way for a dialogue between existential-phenomenology and the TPD while introducing the final set of influences that sustain the phenomenological approach to therapy to be presented in the next chapter. In this sense the present chapter serves as a necessary prelude to that presentation while at the same time being an inherent part of it.

6.0.2 Existential approaches to psychotherapy

There are as many approaches to therapy in the existential view as there are existential therapists. As mentioned in the introduction, most existential therapists come from more traditional backgrounds and are presently practicing some transformed version of their original training. For example, there are Rollo May (1961) and Bugental (1965) who engage in an existentially oriented psychoanalytic approach, and Richard Johnson (1971) whose original client-centered stance has been expanded by incorporation of the existential viewpoint.

Despite the diversity of backgrounds among existential counselors and therapists, there are several elements which seem to bind them together. These tend to center around their attitudes towards their clients and the goals in terms of therapeutic outcomes that they see as necessary for a return to health. Rollo May (1961), for example, sees a principal goal of therapy as increased freedom for the client. Bugental (1965) assumes that the central concern of therapy is personal authenticity for the client. Arbuckle (1967) wants to help his client break away from his deterministic shackles and have him come to accept what he or she has always had - choice and freedom. Johnson (1971) wants to penetrate the client's pain and have him or her accept that suffering is an inescapable reality of existence and necessary for growth.

These existential concerns are also a feature of the TPD. Freedom and authenticity are characteristics of level 5, the highest level of integration. Suffering, in the form of disintegration, lies at the heart of the theory and is considered an inherent part of higher development according to Dabrowski. Creativity, which was briefly mentioned in chapter 2, is also of central importance to both the TPD and existential-phenomenology, particularly the creative transformation of oneself through psychotherapy or autopsychotherapy. A review of Van Kaam's and Frankl's therapeutic approaches will provide the essence of existential therapy as it is relevant to the present purposes. I have chosen to present Van Kaam's approach because of its comprehensiveness and because his style of therapy seems to be receptive to several of the dimensions characteristic of the current therapeutic philosophy. Victor Frankl's stance will then be introduced because he emphasizes certain additional dimensions that have also influenced the present approach.

6.0.3 Adrian Van Kaam

Therapy as human encounter

Van Kaam (1966), along with a number of existentially oriented practitioners, views psychotherapy as a human encounter of reciprocal effects. An authentic human encounter implies that the therapist is fully with his client and that both will be influenced by the meeting. In

the therapeutic encounter, the therapist wants to share in the life of the other, he wants to fully understand his or her way of being-in-the-world. Once the therapist begins to understand what needs to be dealt with, he can then be prepared to reason about the problem in terms of a personality theory such as the TPD and refer to the host of therapeutic techniques he may wish to draw upon. Until then, favourite theoretical leanings must be suspended in order to permit the phenomenon of each individual's story to speak for itself.

Human encounter within the existential view is considered to be at the core of psychotherapy. When the counselor becomes therapeutically involved in the life of the client, it is in answer to some appeal on the latter's part, an appeal that far transcends any diagnostic categories or prescriptions. The client is expressing a human need that can only be satisfied in a human way.

Van Kaam asks whether or not a therapist can be disinterested and remain effective? Can a therapist really want something for his client that he could not want for himself in terms of self-actualization and self-fulfillment? The answer, in this existential view, is no. The therapist helps his client develop the power to see for himself self-defeating strategies and how these cannot lead to the fulfillment of his destiny. But beyond this insight, the therapist realizes that the client must feel his own power and suffer through the pain of evaded anxieties in order to

reach his true center. This is called therapeutic care where the central motivation of the encounter is demonstrated through a caring for the person of the client. This individual, the client, that the existential therapist cares for, is essentially beyond categorization and diagnosis, in contrast to the attitude taken up by Dabrowski as we shall see later on.

The client is viewed as the possibility of initiative and as his own source of meaning and existence. Within the limits of his or her life givens (e.g., sex, race, religion, historical period etc.), the possibilities for self-actualization are considered inexhaustible. These life givens as one's "facticity" can be analogized to an individual's level of overexcitability and developmental potential as outlined in the TPD. In the existential view, how one chooses to grow within these limits would depend on the individual's sense of freedom. Both Van Kaam and Dabrowski would agree that an increase in freedom would generate greater possibilities within the framework of an individual's facticity.

The client is considered to be a free person even when this freedom is stifled under the weight of neurotic anxiety, guilt feelings, crippling defense strategies, compulsions and depressions. Here is where existential-phenomenologists can benefit from Dabrowski's optimism, because the presence of the above in the TPD's terms suggest a level of sensitivity without which advanced

development would not be possible. However, the client requires more than mere recognition of this fact, he needs to work through and fully experience emotional blockages before becoming present to what may emerge as a therapeutic possibility. What is important is that the therapist recognize this fact before deciding how to approach a given client's presenting problems.

Existential will

Therapy which aims at increased freedom for the client directs itself towards his will. It is not that the client has a will that somewhere lies abandoned, but that he is a willing person who is presently handicapped in that realm. The client is also, in this sense, a fundamental openness to reality for, as mentioned before, he is constantly in dialogue with his environment. The therapy client needs to discover within himself the courage to see and accept the truth about reality. It is the lack of such courage that may have precipitated the neurosis in the first place (Adler, 1927).

Responsibility

Another way to express the aim of existential therapy is as growth in freedom and responsibility. When individuals adopt a fixed set of precepts from the world around rather than listening to the demands of reality, they may violate their own best interests and become vulnerable to neurotic guilt. This generally happens at the level of primitive integration where some primordial decision was made in view

of overwhelming life odds. This decision, be it to view oneself as an object who must always be on guard to appease significant others, or to adopt their standards whole and without question, is now the driving force behind whatever symptoms or strategies that keep the individual impotent. The distorted advantage is an abdication of responsibility, a stance in which others are now manipulated to meet one's needs. The disadvantage is never being able to trust oneself and lying at the mercy of the opinions of others. The cure rests with taking responsibility, owning oneself, choosing oneself, accepting all that one is, whether good or bad. Responsibility after all means authorship (Yalom, 1980).

Primordial Decision

A primordial decision refers to the basic choice we all make in our early years, a choice to be either open or closed to the reality of our life situation. Generally, this decision is made prior to our having developed the ability to accurately evaluate life circumstances. A primordial decision is a reaction, rarely a consciously evaluated choice. The latter is made with some sense of freedom, the former is not. The emergence of a neurosis later on may result from the erection of defense layers as protection from a perceived evil world. To undo this faulty decision may require a symbolic return to this moment, a re-experiencing of the pain that led up to the decision. It is to avoid pain that such a decision is usually made, and it will be only through experiencing this pain in the

present that this decision may be undone. Experiencing, as we shall see in the next chapter, is here related to Dabrowski's idea of "disintegration", to the existential emphasis on "suffering" or personality transformation's dimension of "cleansing". Therapy provides the safe environment in which this experiencing can take place. Here the client can begin to experiment with freedom by risking him or herself in self-exposure. The client needs to know that, as he reveals himself, he will not be abandoned and that he will be accepted for what he is. Only in this way will the client be able to accept himself and return to his true center.

Personal project of existence

Van Kaam speaks of the integration of a personal project of existence as a psychic necessity for the client. This is also what is meant by discovering one's life meaning. If the client freely acts against his own best interests, he will be unable to live with consistency and unity. Being always off-center, he or she will, psychically speaking, continue to topple over. This individual's life will remain disintegrated and consequently, disrupted. In terms of the TPD, the client will tend to vascillate between the forces of determinism and the edge of freedom. Like the skipping needle on the record, the client will continue to replay the drama of his primordial decision.

No one can live with disintegration for very long without attempting to do something about it. The tendency,

generally, is to reintegrate back to a more primitive level where some measure of security can be found. The therapeutic necessity, however, is to move forward, to fully experience the disintegration prior to reintegrating at a higher level. This is where Dabrowski's diagnostic approach could be of help, but with the realization that experiencing is the path on which one must travel in order to realize one's higher possibilities.

In terms of psychotherapy, an analogy can be made between the efforts of an expert who is called in to restore a disintegrating building and those of a therapist who is called upon to assist a client with the reintegration of his existence. As with the restoration of the building, perhaps more disintegration will be necessary before reintegration is possible at a higher, more meaningful level. Being with the client during the experiencing of disintegration may help him to find himself and bring to light his personal project of existence.

6.0.4 Victor Frankl

In medical practice, the doctor intervenes, he does not heal, the body heals itself. The same is true for psychotherapy. Frankl (1967) describes the therapist as a midwife, assisting in the rebirth of troubled individuals. The therapist does not create or recreate the individual, he can only assist the client through his particular crisis of passage. The journey belongs to the client since a new

concept of self cannot be superimposed no matter how expert the therapist. Being a midwife, Frankl suggests, means assisting the client to move through the various levels or dimensions of his existence. Ultimately this will lead to being a midwife for the client's emerging spirituality.

Frankl also pays tribute to many of the experiences that characterize "personality transformation". Repentence and atonement, for example, are viewed as keys to a man's emerging spirituality, both important experiences which take into account the therapeutic necessity of coming to grips with one's guilt. On these dimensions, Frankl also lies in agreement with Scheler (1960). A review of his approach reveals how he attempts to deal with these important concerns.

In the area of neurosis, Frankl, much like Dabrowski (1972), distinguishes between neurosis in the area of conflicting drives and neurosis in the area of conflicting values. Dabrowski goes somewhat further than this to offer a detailed breakdown of the various levels of a given disturbance, however, Frankl's distinction captures the essence of what concerns us here. Namely, that the therapist needs to be aware of the difference between conflicts in drives and conflicts in values. A conflict of drives is a frustration of perceived needs, whereas a conflict of values is usually revealed as a frustration of life meaning. Maslow has addressed this issue as well with his distinction between "deficiency needs" and "being needs"(1962).

Frankl's focus centers more on the "being" realm of existence as in man's search for meaning. He does not ignore our baser requirements but suggests that resolution of conflicts in the area of drives and instincts is merely preparation for the spiritual realm. This is a form of self-transcendence which is proposed as a basic feature of human existence.

To find meaning in one's life one must be prepared to deal with what Frankl describes as the tragic triad of human existence, that is suffering, guilt and transitoriness. These primordial facts of being were very much in evidence in the experiences of the four autobiographers. As Frankl would suggest, each author never seemed to despair from suffering per se, but rather from a suffering and despair that appeared meaningless. For example, there was a difference between the early stages of Beers', Merton's, and Mowrer's suffering as opposed to its later phases. When a meaning could be found in their pain, the suffering became much more tolerable. In fact, it could be suggested that suffering is essential to the discovery of meaning, and meaning in its turn assists the healing process that follows a period of suffering. This meaning, Frankl suggests, cannot be approached rationally. It seems to transcend man and is only accessible through an act of commitment, a fact we clearly saw with all four autobiographers.

Psychotherapy at this level requires that therapists confront their clients with the potential meaning they have

to actualize. Frankl is not clear on how one brings this about but claims that if therapists want to foster mental health, they should not be afraid to increase the burden of a client's responsibility towards a particular meaning to be fulfilled. In the research on "personality transformation", meaning emerged out of each author's experience with suffering. In Beers' case, it was the recognition of injustice in mental institutions which resulted in a commitment to helping others, and for Mowrer the establishment of "integrity therapy" which emphasized the value of confession and atonement as lessons he had learned for himself. For each of us it can be suggested that such meaning may be discovered within the realm of personal experience with crisis and suffering, and an experienced therapist may help guide individuals towards such awareness.

Before such an ultimate meaning can be actualized, however, Frankl admits that some re-centering or re-balancing may be necessary for the client before adding increments of responsibility and obligation. Thus one has to appreciate the importance of recognizing the two levels of existence which are uniquely human; these are the instinctual or drive level and the spiritual level which includes autonomous valuation. Rebirth seems to be a crucial shift from the former to the latter. An effective approach to therapy would have to keep both in mind.

An individual suffering from conflicts in the drive or instinctual realm, that is in unilevel disintegration, would

derive little benefit if confronted with the reality of his existential guilt. As Frankl points out:

> Any spiritualistic or moralistic interpretation of his illness would just offer additional content to the client's pathological tendency towards self-accusations and suicide might well be his response (1967, p.76).

Conversely, a client in the throes of a conflict of values, that is searching for some ultimate meaning in life, would derive little benefit from drugs or desensitization techniques. Frankl admits that his logotherapy is not appropriate for every case, but rather lends itself more favourably to individuals suffering from a repressed spirituality. The point to be made is that given the multidimensionality of human functioning and, therefore, of psychopathology, a host of approaches are possible. Even the same case allows for a variety of theoretical interpretations and consequently differing therapeutic styles.

It has been often pointed out by many writers in the field of psychotherapy that the different techniques emerging from different interpretations usually obtain the same results. Whatever the crucial agent may be, if different methods yield similar results, then no specific technique can lay claim to those successes. What stands out as significantly more important is the human relationship between client and therapist. Enduring personality change

appears to be initiated by attitudes which exist in the therapist rather than his knowledge of theories or techniques.

Frankl agrees that it is the relationship between two persons that appears to be a most important aspect of the therapy process. However, he further suggests that even existentially oriented therapists should not be completely disdainful of technique. Sometimes it is necessary for the therapist to cultivate a certain amount of detachment towards the client in order to remain effective. This means that the therapist must be careful not to be guided by mere sympathy for the client, nor should he suspend his humanness by dealing with individuals exclusively through technique.

Frankl himself is the originator of a technique which he calls "paradoxical intention". As a procedure, paradoxical intention attempts to make use of man's unique potentiality for self-detachment through his sense of humour. The technique aims to take the sting out of anxiety generated obsessions by getting the client to exagerate them to the point of absurdity. For example, in cases of anticipatory anxiety, the therapist would instruct the client to "become as anxious as he possibly can" to the point where the absurdity of the vicious cycle and the client's participation in its maintenance come to full awareness.

The practitioner who uses paradoxical intention is not so much concerned with symptoms as he is with the client's

attitude towards his distress. Improvement, in this sense, is manifested as an attitude shift which can have generalizable effects across a host of symptoms, a point also emphasized by Dabrowski as we are about to see. What transpires is more than behavior change, but an existential reorientation where a basic trust in being becomes restored.

6.0.5 Psychotherapy and the TPD

Development in the existential-phenomenological view and that upheld in the TPD depends upon the emergence of an individual's own forces and his will to self-determination.[6] Any distortion of this process generally leads to some form of pathology which may then require the intervention of a psychotherapist. Dabrowski views therapy as a process of education which becomes necessary during especially difficult periods of transition characterized by extreme nervousness and/or symptoms of psychoneurosis. Psychotherapy in this view is aimed at helping the client understand and utilize his particular character pattern and symptoms in the service of further development.

Treatment most often proceeds via diagnosis and prescription in the traditional medical model sense. Together with the client, the therapist makes all interpretations and evaluations of the individual's

---

[6] Most of what is discussed in this section comes from an unpublished paper entitled "Developmental Psychotherapy" by K. Dabrowski.

difficulties in terms of the TPD. This diagnosis then serves as a vehicle for self-education and therapy. Demonstrating to the client where he is developmentally within the TPD's framework is intended to inject a note of optimism into the client's current distress. On the surface, this course of action appears to be based on the premise that insight leads to behavior change, a fact that the literature on psychotherapy has disputed numerous times (e.g. May, 1953; Bugental, 1965; Yalom, 1980). Deeper probing into Dabrowski's approach suggests, however, that this is only a fraction of the picture. In fact his whole conception of what is therapeutic proves to be reminiscent of the hero's classic journey as an experience of transformation. To illustrate, Dabrowski tells us that disintegration, in terms of therapeutic value, refers to a descent to a lower level of functioning prior to re-emerging at a higher more meaningful level. This emphasis on descent reminds one of the hero's mythological descent into the underworld in preparation for the discovery of his destiny and as part of a necessary purification process before the latter could be known. Dabrowski claims that the capability for mental and emotional development, accelerated development in particular, features protective forces that *guide* the individual through difficult periods of transition and *protect* him against full dissolution during the time of psychic disequilibrium. One may be reminded here of the mythical goddess who acts as a *protective* force for the hero

while she *guides* him on his journey. Dabrowski as a therapist can also be viewed as a guide and protector for a client engaged in a personal quest of self-discovery. The developmental and protective forces detailed in the TPD help to reshape the hero/client in preparation for a return to the world where he may emerge in a higher state of personal harmony characteristic of Dabrowski's level of secondary integration. To continue the analogy, dynamisms can be viewed as both demons to be overcome such as shame and guilt, and helping goddesses such as the subject-object in oneself serving as therapeutic guide to one's deepest psychological requirements.

The crucial difference between Dabrowski and the existentially oriented therapists lies in their respective conceptions of mental health. In essence, Dabrowski claims that mental health does not equate with emotional stability per se, but includes an ability for positive development. This is a potential which, in contrast to traditional views, happens to correlate positively with an individual's susceptibility to the neuroses and psychoneuroses. Feelings of guilt, for example, are not always directly tied to some form of pathology, but can also be connected to a high level of empathy. In this sense they are a concomitant of "feelings of responsibility" with a tendency for "expiation".[7] One may be reminded here of Scheler's conception of "repentance and rebirth" and the parallel

---

[7] K. Dabrowski, "Developmental Psychotherapy", p.15.

experiences of "cleansing" and "forgiveness" emphasized in the structure of "personality transformation".

In therapy, Dabrowski's dynamism of "autonomy" comes to the fore as an important therapeutic dimension which parallels the existential notion of "choosing oneself". Through a genuine sense of autonomy, an individual who learns to express self-determination in the charting of his destiny takes responsibility for his life and comes to be revealed as "authentic".

Dabrowski doesn't so much define what therapy is in view of the TPD, but rather points to what it ought to be. Generally, he views it as a procedure which can take on many forms, being multidimensional and synthetic in a similar sense to what is being advocated in this thesis. A therapist moves to adapt himself to each client by modifying his approach in accordance with the latter's level of development and therapeutic needs. In Dabrowski's words:

> Thus, the therapist must always be ready to relinquish, if necessary, his own favorite therapeutic system, his own pet theories and attitudes, in favour of a different approach for the greater good of the patient.[8]

In this way, a therapist is seen to follow the maxim: "physicians exist for the patient and not patients for the physician".[9] Put another way, the client needs to be validated rather than the therapist's favourite theory.

---

[8]Ibid, pp.17-18.
[9]Ibid, p.18.

Dabrowski seems to have again anticipated the tack taken here when he adds:

> Therefore the question of priority or sequence will depend on the hierarchy and differential pressures of the patient's needs. Thus we may concurrently or successively utilize all or any methods of psychoanalysis, group therapy, positive regression, integrative therapy etc...[10]

Thus he is not advocating anything new in terms of approach or technique, his emphasis lies rather with the therapist's attitude towards his client and whether or not this includes a multilevel and/or developmental appreciation of the latter's potentialities or distress.

Dabrowski feels that a proper psychotherapy ought to be "genetico-teleological". By this he means that along with trying to determine the cause-effect relationships operating in a set of syndromes, one must also attend to their ultimate purpose. The therapist needs to grasp the three dimensions of any given psychic phenomenon which includes its past, present and future. In this way one introduces both healthy and pathological needs into the therapeutic process. One begins to appreciate that such an approach would focus on positive development as well as its aberrations.

Psychotherapy, Dabrowski claims, should be based on a deep understanding of personality dynamics, not just

---

[10]Ibid, p.18.

pathological symptoms. His diagnoses are revealed to be more than clinical enterprises but developmental explorations using the framework of the TPD as a reference guide. Viewed from this perspective, psychoneurotic symptoms appear as safety valves for the release of tension which can disappear once this purpose has been served. This idea is rooted in the assumption that neurotic symptoms are adaptive in terms of an individual's emotional and physical survival and emerge as part of a primordial decision made long before one could evaluate its maladaptive consequences.

As suggested earlier, the therapist, in this view, is seen to play a definite role in an individual's developmental drama. This role often resembles that of master and friend, or goddess and mythical guide, who is to assist the hero-client in the discovery of his center and destiny. In Dabrowski's words:

> Psychotherapy is the ensemble of elaborated influences of the therapist on the patient and of the patient on himself (autopsychotherapy) whose purpose is not merely the removal of "morbid" symptoms but primarily the promotion of the individual's personality development through the positive creative transformation of so-called morbid symptoms into agents in the service of that development.[11]

Once again, one cannot help but notice the existential

---

[11]Ibid, p.27.

flavour of Dabrowski's approach, the quality of caring which is reminiscent of Van Kaam and the subtle inferences towards transcendence which parallel those of Victor Frankl.

Pushing Dabrowski's approach a bit further, I see the therapist as a guide who is also travelling his or her own developmental road and can recognize the similar patterns and hazards in another's journey. The TPD becomes the map of this journey, the point of reference which is not to be confused with the actual territory it represents. The therapist needs to be attuned to this journey, to know the important signposts, crisis points and turnings. Adding this knowledge to personal experience, the therapist can more effectively assist his client at each major threshold and respond in a manner appropriate to that individual's particular level of development.

The modern therapist, like the shaman of other eras, needs more than academic degrees to practice his art, he needs experience of the self-shattering variety. Experience with pain, loss, suffering, failure and success may all contribute to the evolution of a wise and seasoned therapeutic guide. Myth proves to be very instructive here, for it tells in a thousand languages of the inward journey all must undertake in the service of their higher development. The shaman or therapist who knows this journey in his heart would seem to have much to offer those who come for guidance and support.

6.0.6 Summary

Ultimately, successful therapy will lead the client to choose himself. Acceptance of all aspects of oneself appear as musts for the cultivation of inner freedom. Accepting oneself and choosing oneself are quite synonymous with loving oneself. This loving of oneself bears no resemblance to a narcissistic tendency, but occurs as an individual comes to accurately know his strengths and weaknesses and accepts them equally. This is what is meant by being-at-home with oneself, that is being truly present to what one is and accepting it. This is an acceptance, however, that is tempered with the realization that one can always improve and continue to grow until death calls an end to one's earthly purpose.

In the present chapter I presented a sampling of existential approaches to psychotherapy and engaged these in a dialogue with Dabrowski's stance as a practitioner. Although a number of points of contact were to be made, Dabrowski's position on the psychoneuroses and development revealed itself to be once again unique. That symptoms of neurosis and psychoneurosis could have positive developmental consequences tends to fall strangely on the ears of traditionalists, a position that occasionally clashes with existential-phenomenological views as well.

Dabrowski's unique view emerges as an essential underpinning to the present position. Along with the existential stances of Van Kaam and Frankl, the philosophy

of the TPD proves to be of central value when injecting a note of optimism into an individual's distress emerges as potentially valuable for the client. Together the three therapeutic approaches reviewed in this chapter have merged into a new whole, a therapeutic stance which also draws upon the many theoretical, research and mythological insights presented in Part I of the thesis. It is a stance which owes its present maturity to all of these influences and represents an allegiance to the existential-phenomenological attitude of priorizing a client's lived experience over theories of the same. Describing this stance in more detail is the task to which I will now turn.

7. An Existential-Phenomenological Approach to Psychotherapy

7.0.1 The basic stance

> The psychotherapist, regardless of his or her belief system concerning the primary source of anxiety and the genesis of psychopathology, begins therapy at the level of the patient's concerns: e.g., the therapist may assist the client by offering support, by propping up adaptive defenses, or by helping to correct destructive interpersonal modes of interaction. Thus in the treatment of many clients the existential paradigm of psychopathology does not call for a radical departure from traditional therapeutic strategies or techniques (Yalom, 1980, p.112).

The current therapeutic approach is existential-phenomenological in that the client's experience is priorized. The client's overt offerings are not sought as possible support for a particular theory. Theory rather is used as support for the experiences of the client. Relating to the client directly is seen as paramount for the two things most required, that is challenge and support.

As a practitioner, what I want is a philosophy of development and change that will *assist* me in the human encounter. Such a philosophy has been presented here and includes the multidimensional framework of the TPD, the structure of "personality transformation" and the

psychological insights contained in the classical "hero myth". Because this map of development and change is reflective of personal experience in combination with results of qualitative research into "personality transformation" and the offerings of many therapy clients, it serves as a useful guide to the therapeutic encounter without affecting the priority of the client's experience.

In this chapter the phenomenological approach to psychotherapy which has grown out of the current therapeutic philosophy is to be presented. I will begin with a discussion of its broader dimensions which include "the client's story", "therapeutic care", "self-disclosure", "techniques" and "multilevelness as a guide". Following this, critical attention will be given to "client experiencing" and "death awareness" as important therapeutic issues. Each of these broader areas will be brought to life through presentation of case examples taken from my clinical practice. Many of the issues pointed to during exposition of the therapeutic philosophy will be seen to emerge as well.

7.0.2 Dimensions of the approach

The client's story

> In the end, man is an event which cannot judge itself, but, for better or worse, is left to the judgment of others (Jung, 1961, p.94).

Many psychotherapists approach their clients via clinical diagnosis. The latter are considered important

since they give the therapist a certain orientation, however, they provide little for the client. The crucial thing is the client's story. Whether diagnostically oriented or not, most therapists want the client's story, for it alone provides access to the human background, the unfolding drama of a suffering being. Only at this point can the therapy begin to operate. As Jung points out: "what counts after all is not whether a theory is corroborated, but whether the patient grasps himself as an individual" (1961, p.94).

Jung appears to be an early proponent of an existential-phenomenological approach to psychotherapy. Much as Van Kaam, he describes his analyses as a dialogue, a true encounter between two human beings. For psychotherapy to be effective he claims that: "a close rapport is needed, so close that the doctor cannot shut his eyes to the heights and depths of human suffering" (Jung, 1961, p.143). This rapport consists of a constant comparison and mutual comprehension generated in the confrontation of two opposing psychic realities. Simply put, unless both therapist and client, at some point in time, become a problem to each other, no therapeutic solutions will be found. Support and challenge are again viewed as primary, to be provided within the context of the client's particular background.

The client's story provides both access to the problem while supplying the needed hints for an effective intervention. In terms of the client's story, it is not

sufficient that therapists attempt to assess the objective validity of a given account, but also to realize that this is how the client perceives his or her world. All of the arguments cited by Allport (1942) and Watson (1976) in support of autobiographies as a data base apply here as well. If one cannot accept the face validity of autobiographical material as someone's legitimate perspective, then one cannot accept at face value the overt offerings of clients who are also providing a perspective on their experience. At this point an example may help illustrate the value of beginning with the client's story.

Eve[12]

Eve was a fifty year old woman who had recently lost her husband to cancer. In the seven months since his death she had been slipping deeper and deeper into depression. By the time I met her she felt her situation was completely hopeless and wanted to be hospitalized.

A phenomenological approach requires that I grasp this other person in her world. Access to this world comes primarily from verbal exchanges, but a more immediate route is through body language which also tells its share of the story. When I met this lady her body posture and facial expression immediately told of a person in great pain. Her posture gave every indication of a being under the weight of a tremendous burden. Her face in particular revealed her

---

[12] The names of contributing individuals have been changed as well as certain biographical data to protect their identities.

total demeanor. Deep set eyes, sloping eyebrows and a trembling downturned mouth communicated a sadness and a plea for help that didn't need to be voiced. She reminded me of a wax figurine now melting in the noonday sun.

Eve wondered aloud if she shouldn't be hospitalized, in fact she practically begged for some relief from her suffering for she was certain she couldn't go on. I skirted the request for the moment hoping to distract her with some questions and perhaps get deeper into the heart of her story. Finally she began to tell me about herself in a slow and deliberate manner with eyes peering at me from deep inside, a haunting look that continued to plead for relief. Throughout the telling of her story she kept returning to the idea of being hospitalized because she kept insisting she couldn't go on. I would listen patiently and communicate my understanding of her feelings, then I would redirect her toward portions of the story that needed expansion. I felt if she would talk about her experiences and unload some of her pain, her burden might be lightened.

The loss of her husband proved to be the final blow in a long series of major disappointments and losses. Ten years earlier she had lost a son in an automobile accident, a senseless death which she apparently had yet to get over. But beneath all this lay an even deeper scar. Her eldest son had been born out of wedlock. Apparently, when they were first engaged, her husband was still married to someone else at the time she discovered her pregnancy. Until then she had

no idea of his status and upon hearing of it felt cheated and deceived. This was a secret she carried with her until after her husband's death. Prior to his passing on she had asked him numerous times to share this truth with their son in order to set things straight. The husband died before it could be done and she was left with this burden in addition to her other disappointments.

It became easy to appreciate at this point why this lady was so depressed. Her distress was not some malady that had struck like a virus, but was the outcome of a long series of deeply painful losses and disappointments. Throughout the telling of this story I tried to communicate to Eve my understanding in terms of being another human being who has suffered disappointment and pain. I held her hand, I hugged her when she cried, responding in any way that felt intuitively appropriate. At the end of three hours she had cried a great deal; she had told me everything she felt she could tell. And when she looked at me, she let me know that she now trusted me and felt that I truly understood. She even managed a brief smile before we parted company for the day.

I don't know how much actual "therapy" went on during the session, but this lady did claim to feel better after having shared her story with me. This in itself is a most important first step. If the client feels they can trust you, if they feel understood and not judged, then the stage has been set for therapy to proceed. All of the above can be

counted as part of "therapeutic care", a stance that requires the therapist's full presence to the other in need.

Quality of caring

One of my first tasks after hearing the client's story is to communicate that I understand the dilemma, that I respect him or her for sharing it with me, and that I care about what happens. This proves to be a very important base to establish, for throughout the therapy the crucial issue of "choosing oneself" in its manifold guises will continously reappear. If the client can begin to appreciate that I care about him or her as a human being then the therapeutic necessity of "choosing oneself" will be easier to accept.

I point out to the client that this process of caring for oneself is as important to the therapist as it is to them. I let them know that a crucial turning point in my life involved "choosing myself" in the face of a particular life crisis. Crisis I point out throws us back upon ourselves. Whether through the loss of a loved one, personal failure, or panic attacks, such crises provide an invaluable opportunity to rediscover ourselves. Here, we are forced by virtue of crisis to reevaluate our position in life, to engage in a self-examination as did Beers, Merton, Mowrer and Hesse. A client caught in the throes of crisis, in the depths of depression, in the web of conflict, has either lost sight of this ability for self-care, or has been forced to discover its absence in the deeper recesses of his or her

self. Caring for oneself is the lesson I try to weave throughout every aspect of the therapy. No matter what comes up in the therapeutic encounter, a lesson in self-care can be brought into the discussion.

Pat

Pat came to me after having suffered her third nervous breakdown. She had a fourteen year old son whom she had placed in a group home for the period of her recovery. She had been divorced since his birth and was involved in an affair that had been on-going for over seven years. Pat was a perfectionist, in her work, in her play, in fact, in all endeavors of her life, to the point where she drove herself relentlessly. Permitting herself little relief from this personal onslaught of pressure she would push until overtaken by exhaustion or more often than not, until she collapsed in a nervous breakdown.

My first question to her was "why don't you like yourself?" This in fact proved to be a root issue behind much of her striving. She was trying to please some abstract entity, a caricature of her parents perhaps who had never provided needed approval no matter how hard she tried or how well she did. Pat was making it easy for them now, carrying on the ritual herself. The cycle involved obsessive striving towards nearly impossible goals, guaranteed failure and then self-chastisement. Eventually the pressure she put on herself would erupt in a nervous collapse where she would be tempted to take her life.

Of course she had realized something was amiss when she decided to seek help. But she had a difficult time accepting that she should be nice to herself when she constantly felt like a failure. Objectively, she had achieved some measure of success in her work, but no sooner was any rung on the success ladder reached than her sights were immediately set several rungs higher. Also, she never strove in any one direction at a time, but in several, thus assuring failure at some future point. Eventually she began to realize how she was setting herself up. She began to appreciate that she was never going to get her parents approval but that she would have to learn to approve of herself. I used my own experience as an example on several occasions in order to get this message across. Eight months later she had begun to disarm the vicious cycle that had come to dominate her life and had made great strides in learning to care for herself. At the present time her son has returned to live with her, she is back at work and her relationship with her long time boyfriend has taken on a deeper, more positive dimension. She no longer needs my reminders that taking good care of herself is a psychic necessity, she knows it only too well from her own experience. Occasionally she slips back to her old ways, but as time goes by, she admits it is becoming more and more difficult for her to be self-defeating.

Self-disclosure

As already suggested in the case of Pat, I use myself as an example to explicate the therapeutic issues that come up for discussion. Like the four autobiographers and the heroes of myth, I use my developmental journey as a point of reference whenever a life example seems appropriate and whenever a particular experience of mine seems to fit, I want to communicate to the client that his struggle is my struggle, that his pain is familiar to me, and many of his conflicts are issues I have had to wrestle with in my own life. I want the client to begin appreciating that I also am an imperfect human being, that what I am today is the result of a long passion filled struggle that continues even now. I present my experiences as options, as a different perspective on the client's situation, their value to be his or her determination.

Another reason why I freely use myself as an example is to communicate to the client that self-disclosure is safe in the therapeutic situation, that opening up to someone else is risky but need not be devastating, that there are no taboo areas for me so that the client will feel free to talk about any event or experience that is personally meaningful even though painfully embarassing. Self-disclosure in this sense emerges as the therapeutic counterpart of "confession" which in "personality transformation" was revealed as an important step towards self-acceptance and self-realization.

Self-disclosure from the therapist's perspective need not be limited to his or her experience alone but may include reference to autobiographical material as well. Along with the autobiographies of Beers, Merton, Mowrer and Hesse, Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* (1966) serves as a case in point. By participating in such a story, the client has a chance to discover that his pain and suffering are not unique, that many individuals have undergone similar or worse trials in their lives and passed this experience on through personal documents. The universality of such experiences becomes even more apparent when viewed from the multiple perspectives available in personal histories, in movies and in myths, all of which are exercises in self-disclosure. The client can see for himself that he is not alone in his time of need and never was when considering the multitude of similar experiences available in personal documents. Self-disclosure on the part of therapists may open the door to a deeper penetration of themselves as well and, therefore, prove to be a gift for both them and their clients.

Richard Johnson (1971) employs his experience in this way. His existential approach requires that he draw upon personal experience with suffering in order to more closely identify with the pain of the client. Through this effort he resonates with his client at an experiential level that requires both risk and courage, qualities that can infect the client who begins to appreciate that he or she is really

being understood. Most often this type of contact is intuitive and one would be hard pressed to concretize it as a procedure. What essentially happens is that the therapist, by virtue of his experience with pain and suffering, draws upon this wealth to as accurately as possible reflect an experiential identification with the client's suffering. This is a very potent therapeutic force, for when the client senses himself understood at this level, a flood of emotion can follow leading to a deep cathartic experience. The following example may help illustrate this point.

Matt

Matt was a bright, well educated young man who presented himself for counseling because he felt he was facing a tremendous void in his life, a yawning abyss in his terms, which threatened to swallow him up. He was deeply troubled by the pain and sorrow he saw out in the world and found himself in conflict between a desire to do something about it and a sense of impotence to act upon that wish. Matt essentially knew what he had to do with his life, but for the moment felt he needed confirmation from elsewhere, or at least someone to just understand his particular dilemma. In Dabrowski's terms, Matt was disintegrating, presently hovering somewhere between unilevel and multilevel disintegration, experiencing an existential crisis of major proportions. On our first meeting the following crucial dialogue took place:

Myself: Could it just be that , uh...what you've

been going through and what you've been feeling is something you've not been able to share with a lot of people?

Matt: Ya, the vast majority of people, 99.9% (eyes getting moist).

Myself: It must have been very lonely for you to feel these things and not to have someone around who could just be there and understand.

Matt: Yes (tears beginning to run down his face).

Myself: So I take it as a compliment that you could open up like you just did...that you felt safe enough to do so... that you felt you might be understood...

Its been lonely for me lots of times too and any of us who experience these things get accused of being too sensitive, making mountains out of molehills, all kinds of other things we get labelled with when in actuality we are in touch with something very important - the root of our existence perhaps?

(Matt breaks down and cries - great gasps - sobs and gulps - flood of tears - sighs of relief - I reach out and grasp his arm, a few moments pass as Matt begins to recover - I know I have touched him)

Matt: You don't know how many years I've waited to hear that. (I put my other hand on his shoulder and Matt continues to sob)

Myself: I've waited a long time to meet someone like

you too (Matt continues to sob) Its a hell of a lonely place to be (Matt is deep breathing now, pulling himself back together) Its too bad its a struggle we oftentimes have to handle on our own.

Matt then regains himself and for a few moments we look at each other as if we were both seeing reflections of ourselves. Having been together for less than thirty minutes we contacted each other at a deep and meaningful level, a point of intimacy only rarely shared. The experience affected both of us. Matt went on to act on his innermost desires for a future of serving others in need and I was left with a deep sense of having contacted someone at a therapeutic level I had only dreamed was possible. We both grew from that particular encounter. There were no techniques employed, only self-disclosure on my part through an enlistment of personal experience that communicated I truly understood where he was at.

Paradoxical teasing

The technique I do like to use on occasion is derived from Frankl's paradoxical intention (1967). I call it "paradoxical teasing" because rarely do I deliberately try to deceive a client with a paradoxical prescription. As with Frankl I see it as a short term remedy for obsessions, compulsions and phobias that for the moment appear to be beyond the control of the client. I begin by exaggerating their particular distress to the point where we both erupt in laughter. I then immediately share with the client what I

have done and why. By teasing them and letting them know they are being teased I communicate a number of things. First of all, they know I am not trying to belittle their distress; secondly, I reinforce the fact that I care and it is what they find disturbing that I am out to get; thirdly, I let them know that I do it to myself whenever the need arises, for I too on occasion have to tease myself out of certain obsessive dilemmas.

I want the client to know he is being teased because as much as possible I don't want him to feel manipulated. The strategy remains completely above board. If the client likes the idea of being teased paradoxically, I teach him to do it to himself. In this way the client remains aware of my respect and, by integrating the strategy into his own way of being, recovers for himself a bit of self-control which can be exercised at his discretion. At best he may overcome and disarm many of his obsessions and compulsions; at worse, he will have laughed at himself for a few moments.

As an example, whenever a client begins to belittle himself in my presence, I resist the temptation to object and point to his most obvious virtues. I listen for a while and then try to communicate to him that his characterization of himself seems far too generous and aren't there many more areas in his life that are riddled with failure? Is he certain he has covered all deficiencies for it seems obvious to me that he is deliberately trying to cover up his true despicableness. If one were to probe a little deeper, I am

sure one could find many more reasons for self-punishment? In fact if one is to engage in such self-belittlement, shouldn't one at least do it right? Perhaps there are courses one could take to become expert in the area of self-denigration. By this time my point seems obvious, I have been half-smiling all along and the client may now begin to smile as well. At this time I explain what I have been doing which seems redundant by now because the client generally has already caught on. The important lesson underneath all this is that I communicate to the client that I value him as a person and it disturbs me to see him hurting himself. The crucial issue once again is "choosing oneself", the issue that keeps emerging no matter what the circumstances.

Sometimes when I am teasing clients by agreeing with their negative stance towards themselves and taking it to the extreme, I find they generally begin to defend themselves by pointng to their good qualities. In fact my facetious attacks and their self-defense may go on for a few moments before they realize what has happened. Whatever its course, the ultimate lesson for the client is a reinforcement of the need to "choose him or herself" in that no matter what the source of their negative self-image, the choice of being kind to themselves rests with them.

Other techniques

There are many therapeutic strategies and techniques one becomes acquainted with during the course of his development and training as a counsellor or therapist. Among those that I see as still valuable are Fritz Perls' (1969) Gestalt approach and Lowen's (1975) Bioenergetic analysis. Perls' parcelling up of the personality into the warring factions of "topdog" and "underdog" along with his "hot chair" technique are quite familiar to most practitioners. However, Lowen's style of bioenergetic analysis appears to be less familiar to therapists as a whole. For this reason and the fact that the next section on "experiencing" is rooted in some of these insights, I will briefly introduce this approach.

Bioenergetic analysis. This particular therapeutic approach owes its roots to the discoveries of Wilhelm Reich (1933). Bioenergetics is a technique for understanding the personality in terms of the body and owes its current popularity to Alexander Lowen who was one of Reich's most noted pupils. The goal of bioenergetics is to improve all functions of the personality by mobilizing the energy bound up in muscular tensions. An individual's capacity to experience pleasure is said to increase with the resolution of characterological attitudes which have become structured in the body.

Through a series of physical exercises, body attitudes and breathing techniques, these physical tensions are

released and accompanying feelings become available for discussion and interpretation. Lowen's host of special movements and body positions all aim in this direction. Since the body is considered the base of all reality functions, any increase in an individual's contact with his or her body is expected to produce a significant improvement in self-image and world view. In some approaches, contact with repressed feelings has the effect of freeing up bound energy, particularly in the deep expression of rage or hurt as we saw with Matt earlier. For Lowen, the reverse is true. The releasing of bound up energy through exercise or controlled breathing is seen to permit the repressed feelings to surface. These in turn become available for therapeutic scrutiny.

The main problem with this attitude is that sometimes releasing bound up energy through exercise may diffuse the tension underlying a specific problem and the latter may not be dealt with. Draining off excess energy does not necessarily lead to the surfacing of repressed material. The greatest danger with an exclusive allegiance to this approach lies in getting caught up in the benefits of the exercises which are immediate, and losing sight of the analysis which requires far more work but which is necessary to understanding and long-term benefits. Given awareness of these limitations, bioenergetics does have value in enhancing one's understanding of the body, especially how the latter stores pain. The whole notion of character

armouring begins to make sense when one appreciates that it is pain and anxiety individuals most want to protect themselves from and storing the latter out of awareness appears to serve that purpose, at least initially.

Multilevelness as a guide

As mentioned previously this approach requires that I be open and frank with clients and accept them as they are. I feel that if practitioners always look for surreptitious motives behind a client's overt offerings, they may tend to be surreptitious in their approach. Sometimes this may be necessary, but never as a basic stance. This would stem from a philosophy of "non-involvement" and runs counter to what is proposed here. Genuine human contact heals as is evident in any experience with love and forgiveness. Surreptitious contact, on the other hand, may successfully intervene in a self-defeating conflict cycle, but without the example of trust and support, may only transfer the problem to another area of functioning and will certainly never get to a root issue such as a disturbed pattern of intimacy. I believe that clients are quite capable of understanding and handling the why's of most therapeutic interventions, and explaining what needs to be done appears necessary if our goal as therapists is to cultivate self-maintaining individuals.

As already pointed out, the basic stance here is to provide the client with both support and challenge. I accept him as presented and pay tribute to the inherent truth of his story as a legitimate perspective on his situation. Any

inconsistencies, self-justifications, and self-deceptions will surely surface as the therapy proceeds. If none of these were present, the client would probably not need therapy in the first place.

I have no specific cookbook formula for approaching clients nor do I limit myself in terms of technique. Viewing human functioning as multilevel in nature, the TPD serves as a theoretical guide. With its five possible levels of development, each characterized by a qualitative difference in level of consciousness or awareness, different types of interventions are suggested. This does not imply that I proceed via clinical diagnosis as does Dabrowski, but that I am aware of the need and hence value of differing techniques for different situations.

Behavior modification, for example, may be most appropriate for individuals such as children or the mentally disadvantaged and individuals integrated at Dabrowski's primitive level of development. Cognitive behavior mod. and certain paradoxical prescriptions are suggested for low level obsessive-compulsives and individuals suffering primarily from phobias accompanied by ambivalent tendencies. Variations on the numerous existential approaches are perhaps more appropriate thereafter along with Dabrowski's own developmental stance, especially for individuals suffering conflicts characteristic of value laden concerns (e.g., search for truth, personal authenticity etc). This openness to a variety of therapeutic styles and techniques

is a stance that Dabrowski himself has endorsed along with numerous other therapists (e.g., Yalom, 1980; Edwards, 1981; Frankl, 1967; Van Kaam, 1966; Bugental, 1965).

7.0.3 Experiencing

> The serious thing for each person to recognize vividly and poignantly, each for himself, is that every falling away from species virtue, every crime against one's own nature, every evil act, every one without exception records itself in our unconscious and makes us despise ourselves (Maslow, 1968, p.5).

Karen Horney (1937) refers to the above as "registering", where the neurotic individual over time becomes charged with emotional pain. In some cases their sensitivity becomes such that they appear to be sore all over, flinching at the slightest rebuff. Vicious circles emerge as a characteristic style for most neurotics in their attempts to ward off anxiety and pain. Horney offers the following guide as an outline of a typical vicious cycle. It usually begins with:

> ...anxiety, hostility, impaired self-esteem; striving for power and the like; enhanced hostility and anxiety; tendency to recoil from competition (with accompanying tendencies towards self-belittling); failures and discrepancies between potentialities and achievements; enhanced sensitivity (with renewed tendency to recoil);

> enhanced hostility and anxiety, which starts the cycle all over again (1937, p.192).

Neurosis in this sense can be viewed as a self-regenerating conflict cycle which the afflicted individual continues to maintain as part of a self-fulfilling prophecy which serves to reconfirm his or her inadequacies and failures. The cycle continues until such time as an appropriate therapeutic intervention can be made.

The situation is analoguous to the creation of a bomb. The neurotic has become armed against him or herself. One portion of the psyche becomes charged with fear and insecurity while another part emerges as the armament or casing (defense mechanisms) in which the charge is kept bottled up. What appears as eminently necessary is for the client to disarm him or herself of regenerating self-destructive tendencies by symbolically returning to that point where their potential explosiveness first became armed. Once again, the individual needs to make a conscious choice "for himself" in order to displace a much earlier unconscious choice which was "against himself" as a survival response to negative formative influences.

This is the recurring theme in the hero myth as well as some early psychological writings. Kierkegaard (1944), for example, understood that what he described as the "lie of character" was built up before a child had a chance to learn about himself and because he needed to survive by adjusting to his parents and his own existential dilemmas. Many

enduring choices are made long before self-evaluation is possible. This may help us understand why most character defenses are automatic and unconscious. The problem with the neurotic is that he comes to depend on his defenses (since he feels he cannot depend on his guardians) and becomes encased in an armor of his own fabrication. The neurotic becomes a prisoner of his defenses which not only fend off anxiety but restrict his freedom as well. By encasing himself in a character armor the individual also relinquishes the freedom to engage in a self-examination. A crisis will perhaps be necessary to help him break out of this dilemma.

Inauthentic for Kierkegaard characterizes the individual who is no longer his own person, who does not act from his true center, but rather has submerged himself in the fictional games of his society and accepts reality on its terms rather than checking it out for himself. This type of individual..."recognizes he has a self only by externals" (1944, p.187). This individual has identified being "for onself" with "survival" in a world that does not appear to permit full self-expression.

Let us examine this dilemma from another perspective. Nature seems to have provided most species of animals with the necessary instincts for self care and survival. The cat eats excessive amounts of grass so that it can throw up the ball of fur which accumulates in its stomach; the cow has a tail which sweeps away annoying insects; and the porcupine

has quils which keeps potential predators at bay. The only resource a human baby has for survival is its ability to cry and wail, to shout out its needs. If we consider for a moment our own experiences with crying and sobbing one may realize that, although distressing, such experiences ultimately had a cleansing effect. If one's body can in fact store psychic pain then one's ability to cry becomes the avenue through which that pain is released.

It is said that the eyes are the window to the heart and moist eyes are reflective of a sensitive and warm heart. Neurotics are often described as sensitive, too sensitive to be more precise. If moist eyes reflect the neurotic's inner pain then a flood of tears can be viewed as a release of that pain and convulsive sobbing in turn can be regarded as the entire body's participation in that cleansing process.

Character armoring occurs when a child begins to unconsciously make survival choices requiring he control his emotions. Prior to reaching this point the child generally permitted himself free rein in the expression of pain by crying and sobbing whenever he was hurt. Once survival choices had to be made and these ran against free expression of emotions the free flow of affect began to be curtailed. Crying would occur less often until it would not be permitted at all for fear of showing weakness. Western males as a whole are neurotic in this fashion for repression of affect is still considered a sign of strength in certain

segments of our society.[13] Resulting perhaps from childhood fears of abandonment, lack of love and recognition, or similar negative influences, the existential pain accompanying these felt deprivations becomes encased in one's character armor. Disintegration at this level refers to the destructuring of this armor and the experiencing of this long-stored pain. Disintegration is feared because often one may feel threatened with being overwhelmed if these long repressed hurts are permitted to surface.

For a return to health the body as the storehouse of all emotions must give up this pain. In order to accomplish this one must become aware of its existence and then permit its expression in manageable proportions. Catharctic therapies such as that practiced by Janov (1971) and Lowen (1975) aim to unlock this pain by probing the sore areas in a neurotic's affective life until the stored bags of hurt and anger have been pierced and then released. Each of these approaches offers something of value. What I dislike is the often total attention paid to technique with little emphasis on interpretation or insight. These approaches do, nevertheless, support the present contention that the body does indeed store psychic pain and that release of the latter appears as a therapeutic necessity.

---

[13] It is important to remember that crying or not crying is a matter of degree. What I am attempting to discuss here is the unhealthy repression of emotions which is not an endorsement of unabashed expression in the other extreme. There are times when it is appropriate to put a check on our emotions.

My own approach in this area is to move slowly and cautiously. I poke and probe at the psychic sore spots but I do not attempt to pierce the bags of hurt or anger, at least not initially. My aim is to reenlist the body's natural ability to cleanse itself. The client becomes aware that I view crying and sobbing as therapeutic necessities. I let him know that as we probe around his formative years and begin peeling away defenses, old hurts and pains may start to emerge. I prefer to see a series of small catharctic experiences rather than one or two major upheavals, for if these occur while the client is alone, he or she may feel overwhelmed by what is happening. Once this process is started it can go on for several months. The value here is that plenty of time becomes available for discussing what is happening, for slowly accepting the value of self-cleansing via crying, and for getting used to this form of experiential expression as a natural part of one's beingness. The tendency to want drugs or other external supports is reduced as the client once again becomes self-maintaining in another important area of functioning.

In the catharctic experience, forgiveness usually emerges as a central issue. Recall that forgiveness was the key experience of the four autobiographers prior to their "choosing themselves". Their self-examination became the avenue to their deepest selves in which suffering (experiencing existential pain) emerged as the central theme of their cleansing experiences. With the neurotic

forgiveness of parents or guardians (see Perls, 1969) is as important a therapeutic necessity as forgiving oneself. The anger and hurts accumulated throughout one's life only serve to keep the fires of bitterness alive. Bitterness in itself can become a stance that is hard to give up especially if it is also the stance inherited from one's parents or guardians. Any neurotic stance for that matter becomes hard to give up as it becomes more and more familiar. In addition, giving it up may also mean giving up that chance (childhood fantasy) that one's parents will apologize for their failings and then provide the love, recognition, and positive regard that the child in the adult still hungers for. This emotional appetite is somewhat pre-conceptual, it was initially felt bodily and then converted to hurt and anger over the years as those important needs were never met. We know this is true because the released pain of such emotionally constipated individuals seems to be bound up with childhood hurts in relation to one's parents or guardians (Perls, 1969; Lowen, 1975).

The individual in forgiving those whom he felt deprived him at the same time forgives himself because part of hanging on to the hurt and anger born from affective hunger involves a certain amount of self-punishment which is a familiar characteristic with the neurotic. The sense of release resulting from each catharctic experience eventually permits release of the childlike need to symbolically hold on to the parents until they relent. This deprived aspect of

the personality can then be permitted to emerge and be nourished through the neurotic's own inner resources, the attendent realization being that what parents have failed to do I can do for myself.

Catharctic experiences can be viewed as a key aspect of the process known as "positive disintegration". Destructuring of the old includes the disintegration of character armor, experiencing old pains and hurts, shedding old skins as Nietschze would say. The therapist's responsibility here is to help a given client move through character blockages by preparing him for what may lay ahead. Reaching higher levels of development also involves plumbing greater depths within. Appreciating such eventualities makes the journey that much easier to handle. Some examples now may help make the above points clearer.

Matt

Matt was introduced earlier in the section on "self-disclosure". His particular experience applies here as well. To recap for a moment, Matt was an extremely sensitive individual who described himself as on the edge of an existential void. In Horney's terms, he was sore all over, suffering a deep-seated loneliness and wondering if anyone would understand the disintegration he was experiencing. He had already seen a number of therapists before he came to me. I immediately recognized that he was in deep psychic pain and that a large bag of hurt lay close to the surface.

My primary aim was just to be there with him. From my own experiences, I could readily identify with what he was going through and reflected this through verbal understanding. This was an understanding from the perspective of someone who had crossed similar thresholds in his life and proved to be all that was necessary to pierce Matt's bag of hurt. As described earlier the pain came pouring out of Matt and I cried along with him remembering my own times of loneliness and despair. The key in this instance was simply warm human understanding from a therapist who had been there himself. A powerful contact had been made between two human beings at a level rarely contacted in daily living, all because of similar experiences and a willingness to be open. Remember, all of this took place in the first session, after we had known each other for less than an hour.

In the weeks after, Matt attached himself closely to me and resisted my efforts to dismiss him from therapy. I can't explain this entirely other than I may have represented a symbolic nurturing parent which he needed for a time. Within six weeks he was already pulling himself out of the dependency relationship as new meanings and commitments became part of his life. Eventually we parted company with the understanding that if he needed someone to talk to he could call. I haven't heard from him in over a year, but I have heard about him, and apparently he is doing very well.

Matt's catharctic experience could also be viewed from Frankl's (1967) perspective as a spiritual rebirth experience. This could account for his need to become attached to me after the experience in therapy and his slow but steady re-emergence as a more solidly grounded individual. The release of inner pain proved to be frightening as well as cleansing. Matt obviously needed some time to try out his wings while adjusting to his new-found center.

Example: Graduate student

I would now like to present another example of catharctic experiencing which occured with a graduate student in the early phases of his PhD programme. Having reached a point of exhaustion, he apparently felt he too could no longer go on. He went to see his supervisor to inform him of his decision to quit school for he was certain he could no longer force himself to go on. Much of his exhaustion appeared to be bound up with a fear of failure resulting in excessive compulsive striving. Probing his past revealed that he had a poor relationship with his father who never much believed in him and expected him to fail. As mentioned earlier, this father would prove to be the abstract audience to which the obsessive-compulsive striving was being played. But since success could never be accepted no matter what academic heights were reached, a point of exhaustion had to emerge sooner or later. Giving in to the inner dictate of expected failure the student could relieve

himself of pressure while holding on to the hoped for parental approval.

The supervisor for his part would not accept the student's felt need to quit. He had recognized in the latter a certain potential as a counselor and refused to accept that quitting at this time was his only way out. He listened, he empathised and he let it be known he understood. He accepted the student as he was and never for a moment engaged in a debate over what the latter was feeling. The encounter became so powerful that the student reported feeling his exhaustion right down to the tips of his fingers as it surfaced into full bodily awareness. The student felt he had somehow received permission to be tired, and in letting go of his painful exhaustion, he literally felt himself bottom out. The remainder of the session involved discussing the meaning of the experience in an attempt to understand why the desire to quit school emerged when the student was so close to success.

Bottoming out proved to be the key here, that is a full experiencing of the student's physical and emotional exhaustion. Through the encounter the student felt a permission to experience his pain to the fullest and the supervisor emerged as a surrogate parent whose nuturing qualities delivered the all important pat on the back. This proved to be sufficient to encourage the student to carry on with his original academic commitment (original heart's desire). This experience has personal significance for me,

for I was the student involved.

I could cite many other examples which support this emphasis on "experiencing" but two more brief ones should suffice. There was Hal who sixteen years ago had lost a son to suicide and had yet to fully experience and grieve that tragedy, and there was Jeff whose wife had died three months prior to his seeing me and who was still dropping into the hospital where it had happened. Until confronted with the undeniable reality of their loss neither man had permitted himself to cry, to sob, to "experience" the pain which needed to be expressed. In each case one session was all that was necessary to pierce the bags of hurt that lay so close to the surface. Hal reported feeling "cleansed" after his experience while Jeff indicated he no longer needed to visit the hospital his wife died in since he could now accept her death. Experiencing as disintegration has many guises but two issues are seen to cut across most sets of circumstances, these are "forgiveness" and "choosing oneself", each of which are seen to emerge as an important part of recovering one's center.

7.0.4 Death awareness

According to Becker (1973), consciousness of death is at the root of all repression. To yield to the full awareness of death is to let down one's guard, to give up one's character armor, to admit one's impotence in the grand scheme of life. Yalom (1980) echoes similar sentiments when

he suggests that the reality of death is a primary source of anxiety. Death awareness in both Becker's and Yalom's perspectives proves to be an important psychotherapeutic issue. Full awareness of one's death may make visible the outer limits of one's existence and result in a radical shift in life perspective. Death is the ultimate form of disintegration. Experiences of disintegration are often feared because they in fact do approximate death.

Awareness of death can emerge in any boundary situation particularly in the crises generated by losing a loved one, realizing personal failure, or experiencing an anxiety attack. A crisis as we saw with the four autobiographers is an event of major import which can become an experience of urgency propelling one into full awareness of one's existential situation in the world. Anxiety attacks you may recall are death-like experiences, and as boundary situations, they can inspire a major shift in one's way of being-in-the-world. In the anxiety attack the lid is blown off repressed awareness of finitude. The afflicted individual, being momentarily stripped of all armor, finds himself naked in the storm of life. Such an experience can be sufficient to shift one away from preoccupation with trivial matters and lead one towards the path of more meaningful commitments. Confronting one's death in any way can lead to a radical personal transformation much as happened with the fictional character Ebenezer Scrooge.

If we can accept that personal death awareness can eventuate a positive personality shift then it becomes a therapeutic necessity to facilitate this for our clients. It is my feeling that therapists don't need to manufacture such experiences, although this can also be beneficial. What they can do is tease out the slumbering awareness of death as such opportunities are available in the day to day experiences of each individual. A focus on loss, on pain and suffering, on sobbing and on anxiety is a focus in that ultimate direction.

The death of another, for example, can be an occasion for confronting one's personal finiteness and lead to a deeper appreciation of death's experiential reality. With anyone close we constitute an "us" and it is this "us" that we lose when this other person dies. In experiencing the death of this "us" we experience a loss of identification with an important other; and whether the relationship was good or bad, we still experience a loss. Any such loss, even the loss of a limb, physical mobility or one of the senses, proves to be a partial death experience and therefore an opportunity to confront this ultimate issue.

A major loss, such as a spouse, evokes the basic fear of isolation. Recall the example of Eve who had experienced numerous losses in her life, including the recent loss of her husband. The death of a significant other only increases the awareness that no matter how many instances of "us" we can constitute there still remains a basic aloneness that we

must bear. No one will die for us, a fact that our Western upbringing leaves us ill-prepared for.

The more primitive neurotic proves to be way out of touch with this aspect of reality although his consistent suffering might suggest otherwise. Remember that the neurotic as a child builds up strategies and techniques such as an idealized self-image to help preserve self-esteem in the face of a perceived hostile world. These techniques eventually form into an armor that protects him from pain but also holds him prisoner. The very defenses erected to meet one's survival needs can become a life long trap. In order to be free, the neurotic must break down that which he feels he needs in order to survive. He must disintegrate in order to reintegrate at a healthier level of being. The problem often is that individuals get too comfortable inside the walls of their defenses. It sometimes takes a crisis such as losing a loved one or an anxiety attack to motivate them to break out. This proved to be the case with Beers, Merton, Mowrer and Hesse. Awareness of infidelity to their own best interests did not emerge until some catastrophe lay bare the lie of their character.

In this prison we call character (Kierkegaard's phrase), an individual can pretend that he is someone, that life is manageable, and that perhaps he or she will live forever. Among its many purposes the armor of character ultimately serves as a denial of creatureliness and, therefore, as a denial of death. Once crisis has shaken one

loose of these moorings and cast one back into the storm of life, opportunities then exist for positive therapeutic intervention using death awareness as a motive force.

My own work in a cancer hospital has afforded me numerous opportunities to witness the impact of death awareness on personality realignment. The diagnosis of Cancer itself is like a death sentence. It shatters all illusions about omnipotence and raises to prominence full awareness of one's creatureliness. The cancer patient is often very angry, feels ripped off and cries out "why me". One can easily understand this reaction in light of the earlier discussions on armoring. With confirmation of the diagnosis the illusions contained in the armor are forever shattered. There is no Santa Claus, the patient realizes "I am going to die someday". It does not matter whether the type of cancer is severe and of immediate concern, or, if it belongs to the many varieties for which there are now cures. The reaction is the same. The patient now knows at a very deep experiential level that he or she is mortal. There are some individuals whose defensive structure is such that they can continue to deny the reality of their finitude, but for most, there emerges a quiet despairing acceptance. And once anger about the diagnosis has been vented, depression usually sets in.

Some would suggest that the cancer itself is a signal of a despairing attitude towards life. LeShan (1977), for example, feels that: ..."the cancer in (one's) body (does)

not exist independently of the way an individual feels about his life, but is in fact related to it (p.4). The despair that may give rise to cancer has come about primarily through the loss of some central relationship. LeShan's studies reveal that the loss of a significant other, a major personal failure, or some similar catastrophe has often shortly preceeded the detection of cancer. An attitude of despair towards life, emerging out of childhood, figures here as well. Whether one agrees with the above or not, one fact is certain, cancer asks the question: life or death?

My own experience tends to corroborate many of LeShan's observations regarding predisposing emotional factors which may lead to cancer. The cancer patients I have met have suffered some loss in terms of a significant other, in terms of bodily function, or simply in terms of always feeling inadequate and unwanted. What once again emerges as a key therapeutic issue is "choosing oneself". The cancer seems to be a statement against oneself and as LeShan points out, cannot really be separated from how the individual feels about him or herself. Even when accounting for all the concrete contributing factors such as working in coal or asbestos mines, diet, birth control, cigarette smoking and cyclamates, a discrepancy still exists because many individuals exposed to these dangers never do develop cancer. Acknowledging that there are also constitutional differences one cannot overlook the fact that how an individual feels about him or herself may also be a

contributing factor.

I realize that some of the above is speculative, however, LeShan 's evidence is certainly food for thought. Today we obviously have no problem accepting that excessive stress may lead to ulcers and heart disease. With this in mind the emotional underpinnings linked to cancer do not seem all that alien.

When it comes to therapy, debate over this issue becomes less relevant. The therapist is thrust back to his mandate of dealing with the client's concerns and the issue of "choosing oneself" again emerges as central. Excursions into the domain of emotional contributing factors brings back little for the cancer patient or for any individual suffering from a stress related disease for that matter. What is of immediate importance is a focus on the quality of the time remaining. The pressure for this concern becomes especially important for individuals suffering from acute distress or in the later stages of a prolonged illness.

As LeShan points out, therapy with a terminally ill individual should be geared towards cultivating an attitude oriented towards expansion, growth and freedom rather than morbid concern for physical recovery. A healthy attitude towards the self often results in an extension of life beyond the limits predicted by the attending medical professionals; at the very least it provides a life-enhancing quality to that which is remaining. The terminal patient does not always seek a cure but often only

wants an expression of care, the same therapeutic care being advocated here for all therapy clients. In LeShan's words:

> Caring in itself is of great value. To the patient the fact of someone's believing in him enough to really work at helping him toward greater self-understanding and inner growth in the midst of catastrophe has a very positive impact (1977, p.98).

This of course would be true in any therapy situation, it only becomes more vivid when one is forced to confront his or her finitude.

Mary

I saw Mary at the invitation of a hospital oncologist. She was a breast patient who had recently undergone a modified mastectomy. Mary was a very angry woman, feeling she had been misinformed about certain stages of her treatment programme. Her present concern was that her anger seemed to be getting out of hand, particularly with her loved ones. She found herself exploding in their presence for the minutest things and then felt quite guilty afterwards.

When exploring Mary's story I learned that when she was fifteen her mother had died and her father forced her to assume responsibility for the raising of five younger children. She believed some of her excessive anger was still tied to this event in which she felt stripped of her youth. Now with the development of cancer she saw herself being ripped off once again, this time being stripped of a normal

life. She claimed to be quite independent especially after going through an earlier divorce, but much of her avowed independence appeared to have an insulating value, protecting her from getting too deeply involved with individuals who might eventually abandon her. She believed that if she feigned not caring then no one could really hurt her.

On the positive side she recognized that her cancer diagnosis had forced her to acknowledge certain dependency needs, particularly with regards to an individual she had been living with for the past three years. She also demonstrated an appreciation that her life had a limit and that she would like to make the most of what she had left.

Therapy, in the early stages, centered around her anger which was revealed to run far deeper than the cancer diagnosis. In fact the many fears emerging at the root of the anger stemmed from her formative years where parental nuturance was rarely available. Coupling this with the disaster of losing her mother and being thrust to the forefront of responsibility, one can understand how her present anger linked up with a basic sense of insecurity. The boundary situation of cancer tore down all her illusions about life and her presumed secure place in it. Characterologically speaking, cancer had stripped her of her armor and forced her to realize that deep down she was still a trembling young child who now had to face life's ultimate reality - death!

Although her physical prognosis was good and many years of fruitful living lay ahead of her, the inescapable reality of her finitude had shaken her to her very foundations. As such insights came to be accepted along with the reality of her low self-esteem, Mary managed to bring her excessive anger under control. She has now chosen to closely examine her formative influences and try to forgive herself for the negative tact survival forced her to take. "Choosing herself" has resulted in a visible reduction in self-contempt, in a risking of herself once again in marriage to an individual she came to realize always cared deeply for her, and in accepting both her strengths and weaknesses as an integral part of improving the quality of her life. I am presently still seeing this woman and she has recently indicated that very soon she will no longer need me. Even though she constantly looked to me for answers, having her questions reflected back she realizes was the necessary route to her psychological recovery.

One thing I have learned while working with cancer patients is the central therapeutic issues of "self-forgiveness", "forgiving one's guardians", engaging in a "self-examination", enduring a process of "experiential cleansing", and "choosing oneself" are no different than with the average population of individuals seeking help. The essential difference is that all of these concerns become eminently more vivid in the face of death and carry an intense urgency that might not otherwise be present. It is

for this reason in particular that I value death awareness as a therapeutic experience. As with all other therapeutic avenues that I engage in, death awareness has had its own liberating impact on my life as well.

The ability to deceive ourselves and hide the facts reality presents us with from our own true nature is only possible if in the background we tacitly adhere to the deception of a terrestrial immortality. Anyone who fully confronts his death, either vicariously through the loss of a loved one, or directly through a diagnosis of terminal disease discovers he can no longer afford to deceive himself, nor does he see any merit in such a strategy. The most vitalizing fact of our living it turns out is in realizing the inevitability of our death. Death's immediacy is possibly the strongest motivating force we can enlist for a rich and fruitful life.

In Dabrowski's paradigm, the phenomenon of "positive disintegration" cannot help but remind one of its ultimate form in which death remains horizonal to every level of achievement and every level of growth. Dabrowski's own experiences with death are there in the TPD, a theory whose very foundations are embedded in life's boundary situations.[14] Death, as the symbol of our finitude, may well be the source of all anxiety, but it can equally be the force that impels us to bring to life our most authentic selves.

---

[14] Provided in unpublished interview transcripts edited by L. Mos and M. Rankel, University of Alberta.

7.0.5 Summary

In the preceding pages I have presented the existential-phenomenological approach to psychotherapy as it has grown out of the therapeutic philosophy presented in Part I of the thesis. A number of existential dimensions were cited as characteristic of this position which also values insights from the TPD. In between the existential pole of this stance and that representing the TPD I introduced my own variations on therapeutic themes emerging from the blending of the two positions. Examples of each dimension of the stance were provided along the way in an effort to make experientially clear what was being referred to and how certain therapeutic strategies could work. The major contribution from existential-phenomenology lay in the emphasis on cultivating a healthy therapeutic attitude rather than an exclusive reliance on techniques in an effort to better meet clients on their own psychological ground. Understanding their particular life stance and how to facilitate constructively proves to be greatly enhanced by an acquaintanceship with the TPD and its attendent concept of multilevelness. With both the TPD and a number of existential-phenomenological dimensions as guides, this approach is revealed to be rich and broad as well as personally demanding.

As with any approach to therapy, this existential-phenomenological stance has its limitations although these are primarily dictated by lack of experience

rather than rigid philosophical boundaries. Experience comes with time and exposure and thus takes care of itself; philosophies, on the other hand, may never change no matter how much time goes by. My clients sometimes become explicitly aware of my philosophy although most often this knowledge remains implicit. One thing they all learn, especially when I use myself as an example, is that in my life as well as theirs there will always be an inescapable substrate of lonely work which lies beyond the boundaries of any therapy. The point at which we part is not when they are "cured", but when they feel strong enough to assume responsibility for their own on-going development.

SUMMARY OF PART II

The TPD, the phenomenological structure of "personality transformation" and the classical Myth of the Hero have been combined to form an all important guiding philosophy for a multidimensional approach to psychotherapy. Pathology seems to exist within two broad dimensions. In the first we would encounter conflicts involving instincts and drives primarily. As examples, one might find certain primitive phobias, rigid defensive structures and a host of problems in living dominated by ambivalences and shifting mood states. Individuals here would generally evidence little or no awareness of their inner life and, therefore, of any underlying dynamics. In the second dimension we would find conflicts of values, reflected in existential despair and meaninglessness, problems relating more to a repressed spirituality as opposed to instincts or drives. Although loosely defined, one can readily see that a qualitative difference exists between the two realms. Within each, however, one could identify many more sub categories as have Dabrowski (1972) and Frankl (1967). What is important to realize is that, since such differences do exist, qualitatively different strategies of intervention may be necessary to deal with individuals evidencing different developmental potentials and levels of growth.

In this approach, therapy does not end in the traditional sense of "cured symptoms" or "resolution of conflicts". Rather, therapy ends when the client is aware of

the inherent meaning underlying his symptoms, the value of suffering through conflict, and the ultimate direction his life experiences are pointing to. Therapy ends with the recognition that one must pay attention to the summons of fate but that one is still free to choose in the face of her demands. Therapy ends when one realizes that freedom can only be purchased at the price of responsibility. This does not imply that one's path is already laid out and one only need find it. It means one has responsibility and choice in the creation of one's identity. This freedom is limited, however, by one's cultural and historical situatedness. One's destiny will shape itself and unfold through choices made in response to experience. Therapy ends when one realizes that the process of life, the pain and suffering, the gains in strength all lead in one direction, they are all preparation for one's death. Therapy ends when autopsychotherapy takes over, when one takes charge of his life and participates through choice in the creation of a personal destiny. There appears to be no escaping life's demands, only hard won satisfaction through authentic living. The demands of existence are one's private lessons, each teaching something of value if one chooses to listen. If there is any cure at all it comes when one can fully confront and accept finiteness and choose life in spite of this harsh reality.

8. Discussion

8.0.1 Value of an integrated approach to therapy

> Actually what was needed was a framework into which to fit the corpus of psychoanalytic insight, so that the truth of it could emerge clearly and unambiguously, free of the 19th century reductionism, instinctism, and biologism that Freud fettered it with. This framework is the existential one, reinterpretations of Freud within an existential context give his insights their full scientific stature (Becker, 1973, p.30).

Norman O. Brown accomplished the above task in his book *Life Against Death* (1959) where he sought to reground Freud's insights into the experiential realities which gave them birth. Part of the present task, in a more modest sense, has been somewhat the same. Throughout this thesis the TPD and a number of existential-phenomenological positions on development and change were dialogued together with the express aim of demonstrating that both positions could benefit from a knowledge of each other. Each was seen to have strengths in specific areas that could provide illumination and support for the other. For its part, the overriding theme of the thesis involved the evolution of a therapeutic philosophy as a guide to the therapeutic encounter and was based on contributions from the TPD in dialogue with existential-phenomenology, the structure of

"personality transformation" as revealed in the autobiographies of eminent individuals and the classical "Myth of the Hero".

The phenomenological approach to psychotherapy presented here was seen to include a number of value dimensions shared by both the TPD and existential-phenomenology. The issues of "choice", "suffering", "atonement", "responsibility", "autonomy", "authenticity", "commitment" and "freedom" were seen to have direct counterparts in each position. Additional experiences such as "forgiveness, healing and ecstasy", "repentance and rebirth", and "passionateness" were shown to have a significant impact on positive personality change particularly as they influenced a critical therapeutic experience identified as "choosing oneself". The latter was seen to emerge through arduous "self-examination" requiring the hero's descent into the underworld of the self in response to some intuitive "invitation" or "crisis".

The TPD emerges as a versatile theory in that its framework proves to be compatible with existential-phenomenological conceptions of "development", descriptions of "passion" or "passionateness", and the "Myth of the Hero". Dabrowski's theoretical concepts are revealed to be more than just abstract categories, but representations of experience directly related to lived realities which are primary issues in the existential-phenomenological view as well. Although

Dabrowski's concept of multilevelness has been arbitrarily defined by the five levels in his theory, such differences are seen to have a basis in the world of objective reality as do his conceptions of differing potentialities for growth.

In this thesis the TPD and Existential-Phenomenology came together on many issues in a clear demonstration of their kinship, while providing a valuable philosophical base from which to launch a comprehensive therapeutic approach. In this sense, their merger makes a valuable contribution towards our current understanding of development and change, and the needs of today's individual who will seek counseling or psychotherapy.

In the introduction, it was mentioned that we rarely get what we want, but we usually get what we need. The current Zeitgeist, I pointed out, was finding expression in the writings of existential-phenomenologically oriented psychologists as well as the theoretical formulations of the TPD. It would appear that although each position is highly expressive of human wants, together they move much closer to meeting important human needs.

8.0.2 Demands on the therapist

> The psychotherapist, however, must understand not only the patient; it is equally important that he should understand himself (Jung, 1961, p.143).

The present approach to psychotherapy requires that the therapist know himself well for ultimately, what he is as a person may have the greatest impact on the client. This requires that he become acutely aware of his his personal belief system, that his demeanor expresses what he values, and that his stance be regarded as one example of a developing value system. In more personal terms, my life struggle has been to discover who I am, where I am going and what best works for me. The client's struggle is to do the same for him or herself. The client needs to find his values, not to borrow those of the therapist; he needs to identify his wants and bring to light his life concerns and ultimate direction. Simply put, the client's therapeutic task is to "choose himself" in place of being governed by externals, even if the latter are valued by the therapist. The latter offers his experience as an example of process and not as an ideal to be followed without question. If the client is to borrow at all, it should be from the "how" I, as therapist, came to be me rather than the "what" that I am. Only I can experience that "what", the client must begin experiencing himself in order to discover his own unique identity.

As suggested above, experiencing in the therapeutic encounter is not only the province of the client. The therapist must also be willing to surrender himself to the moment in order to fully grasp the "suchness" or "whatness" of the individual in front of him. This is surrender of the

most rigorous sort requiring suspension of all presuppositions, abstract theoretical categories and other potentially distorting influences. This is the same rigor required of the phenomenological researcher which is to let be what is, without imposing artificial categories. This form of surrender can then become the climate in which meeting the other leads to discovery of personal meanings, a focussing for the client on his or her true value, in an atmosphere where whatever needs to come forth can arise with a minimum of hindrance. This state of openness can be characterized as naivete, childlike engrossment, or beginner's mind. Understandably it proves to be extremely difficult to achieve this non-interfering willingness to let things be what they are, this finding of order in what exists rather than proceding to reorder in line with one's preconceptions.

Therapist experiencing also includes the broad range of categories eminently vital to the existential approach. This includes an acquaintanceship with loss, suffering, despair and ecstasy as examples. Short of dying, the therapist's experiential knowledge of these issues becomes a most valuable tool. Again it is not necessary to manufacture such experiences but merely to gain a full measure of their impact on one's personal life in order to better appreciate a client's particular dilemma. Also, one lets the latter know that caregivers are not immune to tragedy, failure, or conflict. Maslow (1966) suggests that therapists can benefit

from the lessons learned at Synanon and Alcoholics Anonymous. In such cases the best counselors for alcoholics are ex-alcoholics, the best counselors for drug addicts are ex-junkies and so on. The psychotherapist need not have experienced every avenue of pain that is possible for human beings, but he or she should be experienced sufficiently to be able to identify at some level with another's suffering, asserting the maxim that the best counsellors and therapists for humans in general are those who share the human condition.

The essence of experiencing that I am suggesting here has little to do with specific circumstances. These are only the vehicle of experience, its outer crust, its packaging. Experiencing has a deeper nature, one that transcends the bounds of circumstance and cuts to the core of being human. The essence of suffering becomes the bridge that connects two different psychic realities who may have never travelled a similar path of circumstances. This is the same core of experience that links Beers, Merton, Mowrer and Hesse in a structure identified as "personality transformation" and unites countless individuals from different cultures and historical periods in the classical myth of the "hero". A major consequence of being intimately acquainted with one's experiences of pain and suffering is that when necessary, helpful pain can be inflicted without guilt, without conflict, without ambivalence.

In this approach, the therapist's grounding in his own human realities permits mutual exploration as an avenue towards resolution of conflicts and higher development. Although the therapist is the more experienced, the client may begin to appreciate that he or she will not be the only one affected by the encounter, benefits can accrue for the therapist as well. In some cases the presence of an enlightened guide may be sufficient to propel an individual forward on his or her path of higher development. The therapist's own journey serves as a model of inspiration challenging the client to seek his or her own personal heights. Like the hero of all times, the therapist must be prepared to share his story letting the client know that no one is really a bystander in the on-going drama of life.

8.0.3 Possible shortcomings

There are a number of challenges that could be issued towards the stance presented here. Some would perhaps suggest that behavior change is not at all related to the therapist's philosophy but only to what he does in the therapeutic encounter. This is true to a point, but it has been my experience that clients not only respond to what a therapist does, but also to what he or she is, a sentiment reported elsewhere (Johnson, 1971; Rogers, 1966; Allport, 1955).

Some individuals might suggest that the approach is too demanding, that successful therapy can proceed without such

excessive personal requirements. My answer to this would be that therapy not only affects the client but the therapist as well, that the therapeutic encounter is a meeting of reciprocal effects, and the therapist's awareness of this fact should include an appreciation that since his person is the primary intervention, he needs to constantly be aware of who he is if he values keeping track of where the client is being directed. Critics may still feel this is too demanding; I on the other hand would suggest it may not be demanding enough.

It could be suggested that despite the value of combining insights from the TPD and Existential-Phenomenology into a comprehensive guiding philosophy, numerous unaccounted for experiences may surface and confound an ill-prepared therapist. The answer here would be that no map of human experience has yet to be developed that hasn't overlooked something. This is not intended as an excuse, but rather to underline the fact of impermanence that colours much of the experience we generally take for granted. All theories about human experience have evolved to meet human needs as these became recognized and voiced. Both the TPD and Existential-Phenomenology, as pointed out in the introduction, have emerged in a similar fashion. Their integration is an attempt to do justice to human needs that would remain ignored if each position were left on its own. The value of this approach rests in its attitude which can

never be fixed. This is an attitude of openness and receptivity to that which is. In this sense a theory such as the TPD, while serving as a useful reference guide, remains open to change and modification as emerging experiential evidence would warrant. This entire approach is based on that very premise. Its usefulness will cease if ever the therapist feels the need to etch its insights in stone. That it has a certain value becomes evident in the Hero Myth, the essence of which seems to transcend both the diversity of human culture and measures of historical time, revealing itself again and again across the centuries and resurfacing in contemporary times in the autobiographies of eminent individuals and the TPD. The stance would seem to be ephemeral. It is not based on quantities which can readily be disputed, but on qualities which cut through to the core of being human. A justifiable criticism would be that this core has yet to be fully exposed.

8.0.4 The need for qualitatively oriented research

> Just as many intellectuals lose faith in religious orthodoxy, so do they lose faith in positivistic, nineteenth-century science as a way of life (Maslow, 1970, p.43).

The above echoes sentiments similar to those of Michael Polanyi who was quoted in the introduction. The essence of both arguments is that any scientific system which becomes closed eventually begins excluding data that does not

conform to its parameters. At best such data may be distorted in order to fit the requirements of the paradigm and the emerging truths then bear little resemblance to their experiential origins. It is sad to realize that with so many advances being made in most scientific fields of endeavor, our science of psychology is still rooted in a stance evolved over one hundred years ago. Brugh-Joy (1980), also mentioned in the introduction, points out that representatives of the hard sciences such as physics, chemistry and biology have begun to appreciate that what they examine is affected by the process of analysis. If this is true for minerals, chemicals and microorganisms then why is it so difficult to accept in the study of human nature?

Phenomenological research is still in its infancy here in the Western world, despite its long tradition in Europe. As with any new approach it has been meeting strong resistance for it is sometimes viewed as a threat to science itself, being chacacterized as a return to "introspectionism". As the numerous studies being conducted at Duquesne University, Pittsburg and the pages of this thesis will testify, such a regress is hardly the case. Existential-phenomenology wants to make the human sciences more rigorous, more empirical and therefore more humanly meaningful (Giorgi, 1970). Existential-phenomenology wants to attend to those dimensions of experience that are an inherent part of everyday human life (Allport, 1955). Existential-phenomenology wants to fully investigate such

concepts as "individuation", "self-actualization", "love", "faith", "understanding", and "personality transformation" to name but a few (Turmel, 1981). Its qualitative challenge can help us make greater headway with such additional phenomena as "willing", "spontaneity", "fully-functioning", "responsibility", "self-esteem" and "confidence" (Maslow, 1966). Existential-phenomenology does not want to displace the natural science approach but only to broaden the latter's scope just as the existential attitude can encompass a number of different therapeutic avenues (Allport, 1942; Bugental, 1965). It is a matter of becoming more scientific and not less (Maslow, 1970).

In this thesis it was suggested that a strict natural science approach left the inside half of human experiencing unattended. Priorizing the observer's perspective left that of the experiencer in the dark. For a science of humans to be useful, it was further suggested, it must be able to translate its findings into some humanly practical value. Natural science psychology at present seems to have little to offer care givers and practitioners who daily meet their clients at the experiential level. It is this uncharted area of human functioning that needs elucidation if a human science is to make a contribution to individuals in need of therapeutic assistance so that appropriate interventions can be made on their behalf. This thesis has attempted to do just that in a number of areas, at the very least, to point towards the benefits of being acquainted with both the

inside and outside halves of a lived human reality.

It was suggested that all research in the area of human experience should begin with phenomenology. From these beginnings one could then press on to more meticulous experimental procedures. The therapist for his part needs those phenomenological beginnings to help him make sense of the many human dramas he or she will be confronted with in daily practice. At present very few such researches have been carried out, forcing practitioners in many cases to rely on their intuitions, their gut feelings, in a seat-of-the-pants approach to the therapeutic encounter (Maslow, 1966; 1970). If a science of psychology is to fully meet our human needs, then a return to an attitude of openness to "that which is" appears to be essential.

8.0.5 Speculations on growth and change

> We can understand, then, that getting over one's Oedipus is not a matter of simple reflection about his early family life, or even bringing to consciousness some of the most distasteful events of his childhood, or least of all a hard, rational scrutiny of one's motives. It is, as the Stoics and Shakespeare had already taught us, the going through the hell of a lonely racking rebirth where one throws off the lendings of culture... to stand alone... and face the howling elements (Becker, 1973, pp. 145-146).

The above message is also contained in the mythical "quest of the hero", the structure of the TPD, the writings of numerous existential philosophers and the autobiographies of certain eminent individuals. In Becker's terms what has to be shed in this racking rebirth is the lendings of culture which also form part of one's characterological armor.

Character armor is like an iron bar which has been magnetized, a charging of its properties so that they align in a particular direction. Thus an individual's characterological armor eventually aligns a person in a particular direction, becoming a basic life stance or attitude. This culturally evolved individual eventually loses his elasticity until his entire being has become charged in the direction of personal survival. At this point it rarely matters how one may attempt to change himself from the outside, through willpower or other means, one most often reassumes his former character alignment as exhaustion or tedium set in. The investment of energy for change often proves to be too great since such pressure cannot be maintained forever. Willpower alone is not enough.

What seems to be required is a quiet inner revolution where change comes from the inside out and not so much through the surface. The culturally aligned layers of armor must be pierced to their core and this requires the hero's descent into the world of darkness. The monster to be defeated is himself, that is those aspects which

enculturation has imbued him with and which at the time of rendering the individual could not challenge, only adapt to. The hero's journey is back to this place, this time which still exists within and dwells like a dedication stone at the foundation of the individual's being. It is a stance of survival that now permeates every nerve, cell, and muscle.

Crying and sobbing are the human organism's visible cleansing processes. As "bioenergetics" and "primal therapy" have taught us, and the present therapeutic stance bears out, deep penetrating sobs are what seem necessary to reach down to the core of one's being and remove the rubble and debris of an off-balance life stance in preparation for the laying of a new, more stable, more centered foundation.

This is a process that once launched can take on a life of its own. Oddly enough, those who have gone through such catharctic experiences report an observer portion of themselves which somehow remains grounded in reality while the convulsive crying and sobbing are in progress. The experience itself is reported to be something like having the core of a boil plucked out, only this core seems to be made up mostly of guilt (Scheler, 1960). Despite the excruciating pain, the affected individual is motivated to endure in the knowledge that the process may reap positive benefits.

Growth and personality change, in these terms, proves to be deeply penetrating and authentic. It is not unusual to fear madness or suicide as did Odysseus upon hearing the

excruciating wail of the Sirens as he sailed near their fabled island. The individual who manages to shed his cultural accretions emerges as helpless as a newborn baby, since for a moment at least he is no longer supported by any external guides. This is not an easy process as the experiences of Beers, Merton, Mowrer and Hesse have testified. In Becker's words: "man cannot rise with simple, natural yearnings to triumph over the real determinism of his early years" (1973, p.148). This appears to be why nature endowes us with heroes, they remind us of our animality (mortality), they resurrect awe and wonder, and they point to the many cracks in our cultural facades.

Becker suggests that the heart of a science of man in society needs to be half empirical and half ideal. This would also be the point at which science would merge with religion. Based on what has been offered in this thesis, I would submit that these requirements should apply to a therapeutic philosophy as well. Psychotherapy's contribution to that ideal could include cultivation of self-reliance, developing a sense of openness, enhancing the ability to support contradictions while aiming for the broadest of perceptions. With this in mind, the first task of psychotherapy would be to help the individual become free from the opinions of others, where self-esteem would come from within more than without, where individuals would learn to "choose themselves". The religious dimension would account for the spiritual aspects of this rebirth

experience, the return to childlike awe and wonder at the miracle of existence, the regaining of innocence through commitment and responsibility. Whether we like it or not this dimension exists for many and appears to be the realm to which a number of developmental paradigms point as an ultimate possibility (e.g., Frankl, 1967; Dabrowski, 1967; May, 1953; Maslow, 1970). Scheler (1960), also a strong proponent of this idea, felt that the great increase in frustration and bitterness in this world was largely due to the eclipse of this sacred dimension. Historically this seems to come about every time a given society subtly encourages its members to strive for immediate gratification without concern for the spiritual cost.

When we examine the spiritual rebirth of a given individual we notice that a necessary first step is the annihilation of egocentrism, of self-indulgence and self-centeredness. All of these relate to bodily satisfactions and can therefore be lumped into the biological sphere of existence. Spiritual rebirth in one sense means we transcend this level of functioning to encompass a new dimension. This is a movement away from morbid self-interest to social interest to use Adler's (1927) terms. But more so, this spiritual realm is what the existentialists tend to emphasize as "meaning" and what Dabrowski characterizes as "self-perfection" and "eminence" in higher level development.

If we substitute the field of psychology for the developing individual we may notice an interesting parallel. With Freud we have an egocentric psychology focused primarily on instincts and drives. With "behaviorism" as well we remain in the biological realm of being. And even when we add the envrionment to the picture we are still psychologizing at a primary level. Adler's "social interest", the existential emphasis on "meaning, choice, responsibility, authenticity and freedom" are all attended to in Dabrowski's paradigm which could be viewed as the rebirth of psychology to include the spiritual realm of being. In simpler terms, just as an individual is born physically from his mother and is reborn spiritually through personal suffering, so too has psychology been brought physically into the world by Freud and others and been reborn to include the spiritual dimension of being through the existential contributions of Kazimierz Dabrowski. On a smaller scale, a psychology that is to be individually functional must perhaps be reborn through each and every one of us as we come to grips with life's demands at the personal level.

Of course it would be unfair to attribute the birth and rebirth of psychology to only the above two men. Rather, Freud and then Dabrowski represent significant milestones in the emergence of psychology. Freud developed and integrated his psychology from a medical model perspective while remaining rooted in the latter's mandate of physicality.

Dabrowski for his part has integrated a number of existential concerns into a comprehensive framework of development and change accounting for numerous experiential possibilities left unattended by Freud and his followers. Some such as Jung, Adler, and Rank did point to the spiritual level, but it is Dabrowski who has managed to give the idea its initial scientific footing.

Maslow (1966) distinguishes between empirical and A Priori theories or generalizations. The former aim to organize and unify experiential knowledge so that it can be readily grasped as in the framework of the TPD. On the other hand the A Priori theory, being spun entirely inside one's head, makes no such effort and tends to proceed without attending to experiential knowledge. The empirical theory remains connected with the experiential facts of which the movement from the primitive to the spiritual dimensions in human development has been charted by the TPD.

8.0.6 Conclusions

The present thesis held as a primary goal the evolution of a comprehensive therapeutic philosophy based on contributions from the TPD, existential-phenomenology and the "Myth of the Hero". In dialoguing the TPD with existential-phenomenology a number of themes emerged as essential to the overall task. First off, the TPD proved to be a viable existential theory attending to many of the same dimensions found to be of central importance to the

existential-phenomenological approach to psychology. Secondly, it was suggested that the TPD could benefit from phenomenological research engaged on its behalf in addition to the numerous natural science studies already undertaken. An existential-phenomenological approach, it was proposed, could better attend to those experiential dimensions that a purely objective research stance could not appropriately handle. And finally, the TPD is revealed to be a more useful guide to the therapeutic encounter by virtue of its ability to capture major facets of an individual's developmental journey, facets which were revealed in the structure of "personality transformation" and again in the classical "quest of the hero".

This project could be considered a first step in the direction of evolving a comprehensive therapeutic philosophy and perhaps serve as stimulation for others to reach far afield in their own therapeutic efforts to enlist any resource that could be of value to understanding and improving the quality of human life. If psychology's mandate is to explore the human dimension, then let it be bold in that regard by being prepared to take whatever risks are necessary. Risk, it would seem, is the lot of the hero-questor, be he scientific researcher, psychotherapist or client.

Bibliography

Adler, A. *Practice and theory of individual psychology*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1927.

Allport, G.W. *The use of personal documents in psychological science*. New York: Social Science Research Council, 1942.

Allport, G.W. *Becoming: Basic considerations for a psychology of personality*. New Haven: Yale University press, 1955.

American Psychiatric Association (Dsm III). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (3rd edition)*. Washington D.C.: American Psychiatric Association, 1978.

Arbuckle, D.S. *Counselling and psychotherapy: An overview*. New York: McGraw-Hill Inc., 1967.

Barrett, W. *Irrational man: A study in existential philosophy*. New York: Doubleday, 1958.

Barrett. W. *The illusion of technique: A search for meaning in a technological civilization*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1979.

Becker, E. *The birth and death of meaning*. New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1962.

Becker, E. *The denial of death*. New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1973.

Beers, C.W. *A mind that found itself*. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1908.

Binswanger, L. *Being-in-the-world: Selected papers of Ludwig Binswanger*. New York: Basic Books, 1963.

Boss, M. *Daseinanalysis and psychoanalysis*. New York: Basic Books, 1963.

Bronowski, J. *The ascent of man*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1973.

Brown, N.O. *Life against death: The psychoanalytic meaning of history*. New York: Viking Books, 1959.

Brugh-Joy, W. *Joy's way: A map of the transformational journey*. Los Angeles: J.P. Tarcher Inc., 1979.

Bugental, J.F. *The search for authenticity.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965.

Campbell, J. *The hero with a thousand faces.* New York: Pantheon Books, 1949.

Campbell, J. *Myths to live by.* New York: Bantam Books, 1973.

Chessick, R.D. Effects of the therapist's philosophical premises on psychotherapeutic process. *American Journal of Psychotherapy,* 1977, *31,* 252-264.

Colaizzi, P.F. Technology in psychology and science. In A. Giorgi, C. Fischer & E. Murray (Eds) *Duquesne Studies in Phenomenological Psychology, Vol. II,* Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1975.

Dabrowski, K. *Positive disintegration.* Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1964.

Dabrowski, K. *Personality shaping through positive disintegration.* Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1967.

Dabrowski, K. *Psychoneurosis is not an illness.* London: GYRF Publications, 1972.

Dabrowski, K. *Theory of levels of emotional development.* Oceanside, New York: Dabor Science Publi., 1977.

Dabrowski, K., Kawczak, A., & Piechowski, M. *Mental growth through positive disintegration.* London: GYRF Publications, 1970.

De Grace, G. The compatibility of anxiety and actualization. *Journal of Clinical Psychology,* 1974, *30 (4),* 566-568.

Dillon, M.C. Merleau-Ponty and the psychogenesis of the self. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology,* 1978, *9,* 84-98.

Dilthey, W. Selected passages from Dilthey. In Hodges, H.A. (Ed), *Wilhelm Dilthey: An introduction.* London: Routledge, 1944.

Dodez,O., Zelhart, P. & Markley, R. Compatibility of self-actualization and anxiety. *Journal of Clinical Psychology,* (in press).

Edwards, D.G. *Existential therapy.* New York: Basic Books, 1981.

Erickson, E. *Identity and the life cycle.* New York: International Universities Press, 1959.

Eysenck, H.J. *The scientific study of personality.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952.

Fischer, W. *Theories of anxiety.* New York: Harper & Row, 1970.

Fischer, W.F. On the phenomenological mode of researching "being anxious". *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology,* 1974, *Spring.*

Fingarette, H. *The self in transformation.* New York: Harper Torch Books, 1963.

Frankl, V. Logotherapy and existential analysis - A review. *American Journal of Psychotherapy,* 1966, *20,* 252-260.

Frankl, V. *Psychotherapy and existentialism.* New York: Simon & Shuster, 1967.

Frankl, V. *Man's search for meaning: An introduction to logotherapy.* New York: Simon & Shuster, 1963.

Freud, S. *The problem of anxiety.* New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1936.

Freud, S. *A general introduction to psychoanalysis.* New York: Garden City Publishing Co., 1943.

Freud, S. *New introductory lectures on psychoanalysis.* London: Hogarth, 1961.

Giorgi, A. *Psychology as a human science.* New York: Harper & Row, 1970.

Giorgi, A. An application of the phenomenological method in psychology. In A. Giorgi, C. Fischer & E. Murray (Eds) *Duquesne Studies in Phenomenological Psychology.* Pittsburg: Duquesne Univ. Press, 1975, *2,* 82-103.

Heidegger, M. *Being and time.* Tr. J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, New York: Harper & Row, 1963.

Hesse, H. *Autobiographical writings.* Tr. D. Lindley, New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1971.

Horney, K. *The neurotic personality of our time.* New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1937.

Horney, K. *Our inner conflicts: A constructive theory of neurosis.* New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1945.

Jager, B. Towards a phenomenology of the passions. In R.S. Valle & M. King (Eds) *Existential-Phenomenological Alternatives for Psychology.* New York: Oxford Univ.

Press, 1978.

Jager, B. Dionysos and the world of Passion. In A. Giorgi, R. Knowles & D. Smith (Eds) *Duquesne Studies in Phenomenological Psychology Vol. III*. Pittsburg: Duquesne Univ. Press, 1979.

Jackson, J.H. *Selected writings*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1932.

Janov, A. *Primal therapy: The cure for neurosis*. New York: Dell Publi., 1970.

Johnson, R.E. *Existential man*. New York: Pergamon, 1971.

Jung, C.G. *Memories, dreams, reflections*. New York: Random House, 1965.

Keen, E. *Three faces of being: Toward an existential clinical psychology*. New York: Meredith Corp., 1970.

Keen, E. Psychopathology. In R.S. Valle & M. King (Eds) *Existential-Phenomenological Alternatives for Psychology*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978.

Kierkegaard, S. *The concept of dread*. Tr. W. Lowrie, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1941.

Kierkegaard, S. *Sickness unto death*. Tr. W. Lowrie, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1944.

Koestler, A. *The ghost in the machine*. London: Picador, 1975.

Krueger, E.T. *Autobiographical documents and personality*. Unpublished Manuscript, Chicago Univ. Library, 1925.

Leahy, T.H. *A history of psychology*. Englewood Cliffs N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980.

Le Senne, R. *Traite de characterologie*. Paris, 1945.

Le Shan, L. *You can fight for your life*. New York: M. Evans and Co., Inc., 1977.

Maslow, A. *Towards a psychology of being*. New York: Van Nostrand & Reinhold, 1962.

Maslow, A. *The psychology of science*. Chicago: Henry Regney Co., 1966.

Maslow, A. Neurosis as a failure of personal growth. *Humanitas*, 1967, *3*, 153-169.

Maslow, A., & Mittleman, B. *Principles of abnormal psychology: The dynamics of psychic illness.* New York: Harper, 1951.

May, R. *The meaning of anxiety.* New York: Ronald, 1950.

May, R. *Man's search for himself.* New York: Norton, 1953.

May, R. Existential bases of psychotherapy. In R. May (Ed) *Existential psychology.* New York: Random House, 1961, 78-95.

McNamara, W. *Mystical passion: Spirituality for a bored society.* New York: Paulist Press, 1977.

Merleau-Ponty, M. *The primacy of perception.* New York: Humanities Press, 1962.

Merton, T. *Seven storey mountain.* New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1948.

Mounier, E. *Traite du charactere (2nd Ed).* Paris, 1947.

Mowrer, O.H. A stimulus-response analysis of anxiety and its role as a reinforcing agent. *Psychological Revue,* 1939, *46: 6,* 553-565.

Mowrer, O.H. *Abnormal reactions or actions: An autobiographical answer.* Dubuque Iowa: W.C. Brown Co., 1966.

Peavy, V. Existential reflections on counseling. *Canadian Counselor,* 1978, *13: 1,* 40-44.

Polanyi, M. *Personal knowledge: Towards a post-critical philosophy.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958.

Portnoy, I. The anxiety states. In S. Arieti (Ed) *American Handbook of Psychiatry,* 1967, *1.*

Progoff, I. Psychology as a road to a personal philosophy. *Journal of Individual Psychology,* 1961, *17: 1,* 43-48.

Rony, J. *Les Passions (3rd Ed).* Paris: Press Universitaires de France, 1967.

Rogers, C. *Client-centered therapy: Its current practice, implications and theory.* Boston: Houghton & Mifflin, 1951.

Rogers, C. *On becoming a person.* Boston: Houghton & Mifflin, 1961.

Rogers, C. *A way of being.* Boston: Houghton & Mifflin, 1980.

Sartre, J.P. Existentialism is a humanism. In W. Kaufman (Ed) *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, Cleveland and New York: Meridian, 1956.

Scheler, M. *On the eternal in man*. Tr. Bernard Noble, London: SCM Press, 1960 (1st German Edition, 1921).

Skinner, B.F. *Beyond freedom and dignity*. New York: Bantam Vintage, 1971.

Solomon, R. *The passions*. New York: Doubleday, 1976.

Stendhal, H. *L'Amour*. Paris, 1896.

Strasser, S. *Phenomenology of feeling*. Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1977.

Sullivan, H.S. The theory of anxiety and the nature of psychotherapy. *Psychiatry*. 1949, *12*, 3-13.

Szekely, E. *Being-anxious: An existential-phenomenological approach*. Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Regina, 1980.

Tillich, P. *The courage to be*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1952.

Turmel, M.J. The phenomenology of passion in personality development. In N. Duda (Ed) *Theory of positive disintegration: Proceedings of the 3rd international conference*. Miami: University of Miami Xerox, 1981. (a)

Turmel, M.J. *Personality transformation: An existential-phenomenological investigation*. Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Regina, 1981. (b)

Van Kaam, A. *The art of existential counseling*. Wilkes-Barre, Penn.: Dimension Books, 1966.

Van Kaam, A. *Existential foundations of psychology*. Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1967.

von Eckartsberg, R. *Methods in existential-phenomenological psychology*. Unpublished manuscript, Duquesne University, 1978. (a)

von Eckartsberg, R. Person perception revisited. In R. Valle & M. King (Eds) *Existential-phenomenological alternatives for psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978. (b)

Watson, L.C. Understanding a life history as a subjective document:A hermeneutical and phenomenological

perspective. *Ethos*, 1976, *4*, 95-131.

Wilkins, W., Hjelle, A. & Thompson, M. Anxiety and actualization: A reconceptualization. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 1977, *33 (4)*, 1001-1005.

Yalom, I.D. *Existential psychotherapy*. New York: Basic Books, 1980.

Zilboorg, G. Fear of death. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 1943, *12*, 465-475.

Appendix A

Steps of analysis

Step 1. First reading: Each autobiography was read through once to get a sense of the whole.

Step 2. Working through: Each autobiography was read again, but this time more carefully and copious notes were taken on all aspects of each individual's experience that seemed related to the phenomenon.

Step 3. Dividing the text into sections: each text was divided into manageable sections. These were portions of the text where the author described a mood, event, or scene in his life. Each of these sections were then summarized in terms of their general themes.

Step 4. Life phases and central themes: Major shifts in an author's life orientation were identified by their dominant theme. Also, each general theme from the previous sectioning was probed for its central meaning and rewritten as a central theme.

Step 5. Life phases and revelatories: The central themes of each life phase were related to each other and to the phenomenon as a whole, while being probed for what they revealed of personality transformation. This resulted in a new series of statements called "revelatories".

Step 6. Life-situated description: Using the revelatories from step 5 as a guide, a running account of the experience of transformation was written for each author.

Step 7. Life-situated structure: Using the results of steps 5 and 6 as a guide, this step aimed at capturing the unfolding of the phenomenon as the latter was revealed in each individual case.

Step 8. General structure: The four life-situated structures generated in step 7 were related to each other and then integrated to provide a tight but comprehensive view of personality transformation as the phenomenon seemed to cut across the four author's experiences.

As may now be evident, each step represents a qualitative leap in terms of acquaintanship with, and, understanding of the phenomenon as it became revealed through the process of

analysis. Upon reaching step 8, one could readily recognize many of the phenomenon's more universal aspects as these repeatedly emerged in each individual case.